

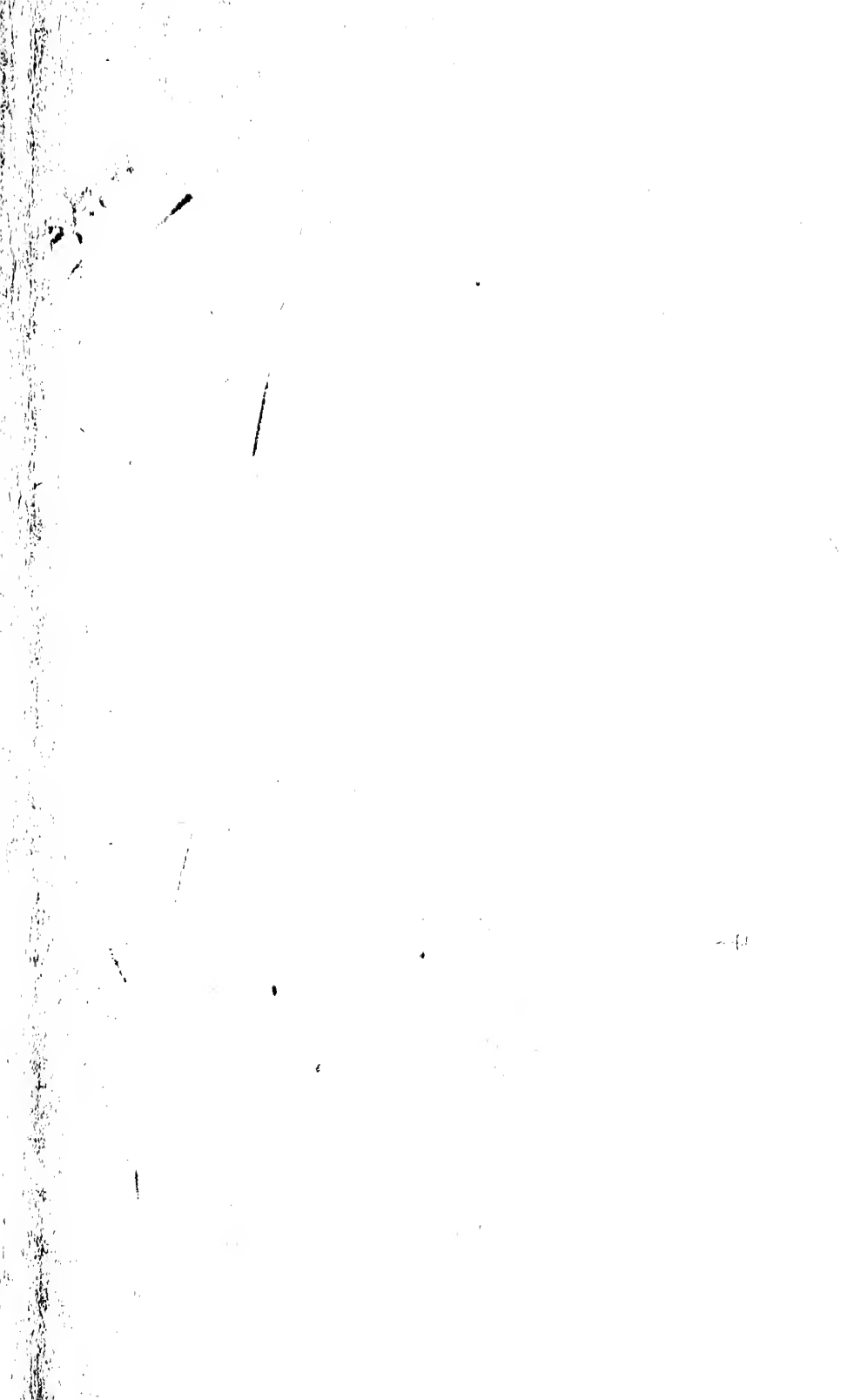


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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
FRANCES PERKINS, Secretary  
CHILDREN'S BUREAU  
GRACE ABBOTT, Chief

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# GUIDING THE ADOLESCENT

BY  
D. A. THOM, M.D.



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## LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR,  
CHILDREN'S BUREAU,  
*Washington, October 11, 1933.*

MADAM: There is transmitted herewith a bulletin for parents entitled "Guiding the Adolescent." This bulletin was written for the Children's Bureau by Dr. D. A. Thom, director of the habit clinics of Boston and director of the division of mental hygiene in the Department of Mental Diseases of Massachusetts.

Respectfully submitted.

GRACE ABBOTT, *Chief.*

HON. FRANCES PERKINS,  
*Secretary of Labor.*



# GUIDING THE ADOLESCENT.

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## INTRODUCTION

### PURPOSE OF THE PAMPHLET

A parent's interest in the welfare of his child begins long before birth and lasts all his life, but his method of expressing this interest necessarily undergoes many changes. Before the child's birth it is manifested in the mother's care of herself—in her attention to her diet, her hours of rest, her out-of-door exercise, and the various details of care of her own body. After birth this care is transferred to the infant—to nursing, bathing, and dressing him, and keeping him dry and comfortable. As the baby grows older, some of the interest in caring for his elementary physical needs is turned to getting his cooperation in this care—in getting him, for instance, to use the toilet chair and to feed himself. With the development of his mental life, interest in his physical needs becomes secondary to interest in his rapidly forming habits and attitudes—his ability to care for himself and to get along with other people. And as the child grows up, the parent's interest is in the child's achievements, his school grades, his athletic and social activities, his vocation, his friendships, his marriage, and in turn, his children.

This interest may be instinctive in the parent or may grow out of his love and sense of responsibility for the child, but accurate information as to the best methods of rearing the child under the conditions of present-day civilization will not come to the parent in this way. The pamphlets on Prenatal Care, Infant Care, The Child from One to Six, and Child Management were published by the Children's Bureau in the hope of making such information more easily available to parents. As the child begins to grow up, however, the ideas of "care" and "management" must be abandoned, for the growing child resents such parental control; he wants to care for and manage himself, and this is not only desirable but essential if he is to become a normal, independent adult. But because the child does not learn to become completely independent all at once, the parent will find it necessary to replace care and management with tactful guidance.

The present pamphlet has been written in the hope of helping parents to understand the adolescent and how they can guide him from childhood to healthy, happy adulthood.

## DEFINING ADOLESCENCE

Adolescence is the period of growing up that comes between childhood and adulthood. It may be thought of either as the actual growing-up process or as the time during which this process takes place. In either case it is usually regarded as covering the years from 12 to 20, or the "teen" age.

In the simple forms of animal life this growing up is a purely physiological process which takes place so naturally that there is no distinct period of adolescence. With increasing complexity of life and of civilization, however, growing up, too, becomes more complex. Thus it is necessary for the child of today to become not only physiologically mature but also intellectually, emotionally, and socially mature; and, as these various forms of growing up may not all take place at the same time, adolescence stretches out over an increasingly longer period. A girl may reach puberty at the age of 12 or 13 and, being unaware of any new sex emotions, may continue to play with younger boys and girls, remaining emotionally and socially a child until some experience awakens in her more adult reactions; or a boy, growing up with adults and spending much time in wide reading and adult conversation, may reach 16 with an intellectual maturity far beyond that of the average adult, while physically and emotionally he is still a child.

But other periods in the life of the child are similarly complex in present-day civilization. During early childhood boys and girls must learn not only to care for the simple physical needs which they share with young animals, but also to read and write, to be polite, and to control their tempers and their impulse to cry over every injury.

Not until the child begins to grow up is he, however, likely to be troubled by, or even conscious of, the fact that there are many sides to his nature; that these sides do not always keep pace with one another; and that, although he is "too big" to do some things, he is not old enough to do others. He may find that although he is too grown up to play "Indians" or to be "tucked in", he is not yet considered old enough to go to late parties; or although he is wearing long trousers he is not yet considered old enough to smoke. Nor does the law help by setting any one age as the end of childhood and the beginning of adulthood. On the contrary, it fixes one age as the minimum for driving an automobile, another for required school attendance, another for entering industry, another for culpability for unlawful conduct, another for marrying without parental consent, another for making valid contracts, and another for voting; and, although some of these may coincide, they are more likely to

vary, not only from State to State but even within one State and one community.

Thus the growing up which takes place very simply in young animals and in primitive children, who are often initiated into their adult responsibilities as soon as they have reached puberty, is so gradual and complex in our children that it requires approximately 8 years; and these 8 years have come to be regarded as a special period with peculiar qualities and characteristics of their own, known as the period of adolescence.

### ADULT ATTITUDE TOWARD ADOLESCENCE

Within the last few years the "problems of adolescence" have been the subject of so many investigations, books, articles, and speeches that many people have come to think of adolescence as necessarily a period of problems. Every period of life has its problems. But the problems occurring in early childhood or in late adult life are likely to bother only the members of the immediate family who, in one way or another, must adjust themselves to the undesirable personality traits and behavior manifestations of their offspring, their sisters and brothers, or the husband or wife, as the case may be. The problems occurring during adolescence, however, are likely to be noticed in the boarding school, the high school, and the college or in recreational groups, such as clubs and camps; and they may come to the attention of such an agency as the juvenile court. As these institutions and agencies have looked to the fields of psychology and psychiatry for help in dealing with their young people, the problems occurring during the period of adolescence have doubtless been scrutinized more extensively and more specifically than those occurring, for example, during the twenties or the thirties.

No attempt will be made in this publication to discuss all the problems which may occur during adolescence. As the aim of the pamphlet is to help the parent guide the normal adolescent and deal with problems common to most growing boys and girls, unusual problems and problems which cannot be dealt with save by a physician or a psychiatrist have no place in the discussion.

There is grave danger that those whose professional activities bring them rather exclusively in contact with the maladjusted will eventually begin to interpret life in terms of the peculiarities, eccentricities, and personality deviations found in this rather restricted and unrepresentative group. Members of the professions of education, psychology, psychiatry, and social work whose attention has been centered rather exclusively on maladjusted or problem individuals in the adolescent years have not been immune to this danger.

In their interest in working with this group, they have been inclined to analyze the primary make-up of these poorly adjusted adolescents, selecting every problem and every deviation from the so-called "normal", and to combine these findings into a description which they then regard as characteristic of all adolescents but which actually represents nothing at all, being characteristic neither of adolescents as a group nor of any particular adolescent who may be maladjusted. This is one of the dangers of too high specialization, too broad generalization, and, last and most important, too little association with the great masses of people who make up human society.

It is not to be denied that between the years of 12 and 20 there are very definite problems of a physical, mental, and social nature which youth must necessarily meet in its adjustment to present needs and preparation for life's future demands. These problems are sufficiently well recognized, and the most common causes for failure in meeting them sufficiently well understood, to justify discussion. Yet to assume that every adolescent boy or girl is drifting about in an emotional whirlpool or may be dashed on the shores of failure because of some hidden conflict, is nothing more than an indulgence in phantasy.

There are a sufficient number of problem people and problem situations to demand the attention and occupy the time of all those who are now trained or may be adequately trained in the next decade without creating problems where they do not exist.



## PHYSICAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Not infrequently a parent is heard to say, "Now that my child is 15 years old I should like to make some study of adolescence." The fact is that only a minimum of advantage is to be gained by such study when the offspring has already reached adolescence. The maximum gain is to be achieved when adolescence is foreseen in the rearing of the infant and the child. (Hollingworth, Leta S.: *The Psychology of the Adolescent*, p. viii. D. Appleton & Co., New York, 1928.)

### GENERAL PHYSICAL GROWTH<sup>1</sup>

A sudden and perhaps surprising increase in height and weight, and in the size of arms, legs, hands, feet, and any other part of the anatomy is typical during adolescence. Within 1 year the child may gain 25 or 30 pounds in weight and 4 or 5 inches in height. This period of rapid growth usually occurs early in the "teens" and somewhat earlier in girls than in boys.

This sudden increase, however, rarely changes the nature of the child's physique. In other words, both the short child and the tall child grow noticeably during adolescence, the short child growing into a short adult, and the tall child into a tall adult. There are, of course, exceptions; a child who has had long and serious illness interfering with normal growth before adolescence may, on recovery, suddenly make up for this during adolescence; and a child suffering from a glandular disturbance may have an abnormal rate of growth. For the average child, however, nothing but continuous growth should be expected.

Girls grow more slowly after 14 years and usually stop growing entirely by the time they are 20. Boys may continue to grow until they are 22 or even 23 years of age, but their rate of growth is slower after the fifteenth or the sixteenth year.

Strength also increases rapidly from the seventh year on, and more rapidly during the early teens. The fact that the adolescent's strength increases more rapidly than his height accounts for some of his awkwardness and clumsiness in managing himself; he has to learn by experience just how much effort he needs to put behind his strong muscles.

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<sup>1</sup>The author is indebted to D. Appleton & Co. for permission to use in this pamphlet some of the material which has previously appeared in his book, *Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems*, published in 1932.

## MATURING OF THE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM

The most outstanding physiological development during adolescence is the maturing of the reproductive organs. When these organs become capable of functioning as in the adult—when the ovaries in the girl begin to release the egg cells, or ova, essential to child-bearing, and the testicles in the boy begin to release the sperm cells essential to fertilization—puberty has been reached.

It is not easy to know just when the reproductive organs begin to function. In the girl ovulation, or the formation and discharge of egg cells, is closely connected with menstruation, and so the girl is said to be “mature” when she has had her first menstrual flow, or “monthly period.” Although there is no similar process in the boy, the discharge of semen during sleep, known as a “nocturnal emission”, is often considered evidence that he has reached maturity.

The age at which these signs of maturity occur varies considerably. In this country puberty is likely to occur between the ages of 12 and 15 years in girls and a year or two later in boys. But race, climate, living conditions, and the child's own physical condition all play a part in the maturing process and make even further variations in age possible.

Accompanying and preceding puberty itself, noticeable physical changes take place in the child. There is a growth of hair in the armpits and pubic regions, and further development of the genitals; the voice becomes fuller and, in the boy, is likely to “break” as it changes from a childish to a more masculine pitch. As the girl's breasts develop and her hips broaden, her body begins to appear womanly, while the boy, with his broadening shoulders and the growth of hair on his face, begins to take on a more manly aspect.

## PHYSICAL HYGIENE

With all these changes taking place in the child's body, some thought must be given to his physical hygiene. Rapid growth is likely to cause either a tremendous increase in the child's appetite, or, particularly in the girl, a tendency to finickyness with loss of appetite at some times and strong, special cravings—as, for example, for particularly sweet or sour dishes—at other times. Attention must therefore be given not only to the child's diet but also to his eating habits. Sudden increase in the rate of growth is likely to cause fatigue, making long hours of sleep essential. Rapid growth of the larger muscles, gain in strength, and the possible awakening of a disturbing sex-consciousness make out-of-door exercise highly desirable. As all the increased body activities are likely to increase the

body wastes, good habits of elimination, including freedom from constipation without the use of drugs, and a healthy, active skin condition are of primary importance.

In other words, the rules for the adolescent are much the same as those for the younger child. Parents scarcely need to be reminded that an abundance of milk, wholesome bread and cereals, and fresh fruits and vegetables are essential; that rich pastries and heavy sweets are undesirable; and that tea and coffee are unsuitable. They know from experience that regular meals and a minimum of eating between meals keep the small child's digestive system in good order; and that plenty of out-of-door play, regular toilet habits, and a clean body are essential to keeping him comfortable, healthy, and cheerful. By the time adolescence is reached, they should be able to depend on their boys and girls to follow a hygienic routine with little assistance. Certain modifications may have to be introduced; e.g., increase in the amounts of food, gradual decrease in the hours of sleep, changes in the type of out-of-door activity, and perhaps greater conscientiousness about internal and external body cleanliness. But there are no special rules for the hygiene of the adolescent; puberty is, after all, but the continuation of a development which began before birth and for which the normal human being is as well equipped as he is for any other natural physical change. The parent who has helped his child establish good habits of eating, sleeping, elimination, cleanliness, posture, and exercise in early childhood needs only to impress upon the adolescent the importance of continuing to observe the fundamental principles of physical hygiene in order to maintain a healthy and efficient body during this or any other period of his life.

With regard to the hygiene of the menstruating girl, there seems to be a great difference of opinion. The old attitude that the menstruating girl was "sick" or "unwell", that she could not bathe, that she must never get wet feet, that she must not eat certain foods, and that all her activities should be modified even to the extent of spending some time in bed, is scorned by the modern girl who goes to coeducational schools and lets nothing interfere with the interests and activities she shares with boys; and it is necessarily scorned by the girl who enters industry or business and is obliged to ignore all minor ills and discomforts. But neither of these attitudes can be whole-heartedly recommended nor whole-heartedly condemned. Physical build, the position and stage of development of the reproductive organs, the functioning of the glands of internal secretion, and the general physical condition of individual girls vary so greatly that although one girl may safely indulge in sea bathing during her

menstrual period, another may be actually obliged to spend some time in bed. Although the effects of menstruation on physical and mental activities have been studied by numerous investigators, these studies have usually been made on women and girls in whom the function was already well established; their findings would not necessarily apply, therefore, to the maturing girl who is not yet fully grown and whose periods may still be somewhat irregular.

For these reasons parents can be advised only in a general way, that they themselves regard menstruation as a normal process, neither looking upon the girl as "sick" nor letting her regard herself so. They may encourage her to continue her usual activities in the usual manner, warning, however, against overexertion and undue exposure. If she seems to be experiencing unusual discomfort or pain, they should refer her to a physician both for advice as to hygiene in the particular case and for correction of the cause of the difficulty if possible.

#### PROBLEMS INCIDENTAL TO PHYSICAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Much of the behavior which parents consider unusual, disturbing, irritating, or alarming is actually but a normal reaction to the processes of physical development and the general business of growing up. One of the most trying difficulties for both parents and child may be the simple self-consciousness that comes to the child who grows so rapidly that he does not quite know what to do with all of himself. This is a perfectly normal phase of adolescence, and yet it may present rather a problem to a child who is diffident and sensitive and realizes that his awkwardness annoys his parents and amuses his friends. So, too, the self-consciousness and unhappiness resulting from the poor complexion with which many adolescents are afflicted may lead to such lack of self-confidence that the boy or girl prefers solitude to participation in activities with others, and may wander about friendless and forlorn.

Because such experiences matter intensely to the adolescent—and often trouble his parents—they merit further attention.

*Arnold* was a long, lanky, 15-year old whose arms and legs had apparently kept a long way ahead of the rest of his body in the course of his growing up. His hands seemed fairly to dangle away in space, and he managed all his body with loose and lurching movements.

In spite of the fact that he was a bright lad, he did very poor school work and was considered the "laziest boy in school." He seemed absolutely out of harmony with his work, with his classmates, and with the world.

This boy was so self-conscious and so unhappy over looking and feeling queer that he was unable to get along with anyone. Being depressed he made bitterly sarcastic and cynical remarks on every occasion, and this behavior made him still less popular. He was referred to as "that great big dumb-

looking guy " by his classmates, and it was hard to tell whether their attitude was responsible for his sullen unhappiness or whether his sullen unhappiness led to conduct that made such an attitude inevitable.

Clumsiness, awkwardness, inability to manage rapidly growing feet, and self-consciousness over hands that seem suddenly to thrust themselves out of their sleeves are probably more characteristic of the adolescent boy than of the adolescent girl.

Growth is at times so rapid that it takes the child a little time to get accustomed to his increased size. A further complication arises through the fact that parts of his body may grow more rapidly than others, so that it is difficult for him to coordinate his movements. Moreover, increase in strength not only is rapid but is relatively even greater than increase in size, and until the adolescent learns to control his new strength he is likely to be awkward and lumbering.

The following description of Martha illustrates another type of unhappy attitude which may arise in the course of self-consciousness over physical development:

*Martha* was born in "the old country" in a community in which boys and girls mature very early. When she came to the United States she soon learned English and attended grammar school with American-born children. She was rather bright and very studious and held her own fairly well with her classmates, but she was noticeably taller and more fully developed than any of the other girls and she felt self-conscious and ashamed of this. Whenever she was called upon to recite she would stand with a slump, her knees flexed, her shoulders drooping, and her whole body sagging. She did this so continuously whenever she was with these smaller children, that she developed not only a poor standing but also poor walking posture, which, quite aside from a possible danger to her health, made her look most unattractive.

The importance of good posture habits in maintaining the various organs of the body in their proper position and in enabling them to work to the best advantage has been so much stressed by physicians in recent years that posture charts, posture exercises, and posture clinics have been made available for great numbers of children. Posture training, however, is something which should be begun in early childhood and under the supervision of someone familiar with the anatomy and "mechanics" of the human body, and therefore no attempt will be made to outline its principles here. The subject is called to the attention of parents, in this connection, for two reasons only: (1) That rapidly growing children may have difficulty in learning how to carry themselves or may feel tired and inclined to slump, so that special attention to posture is advisable at this time; and (2) that many adolescents, particularly girls, assume unhealthy posture because of self-consciousness over their sudden growth. The former may need more rest, other forms of exercise, and possibly the advice of the physician and the use of braces, but the latter need chiefly a change of mental attitude.

Round-shoulderedness is not an easy habit to overcome. Although it is difficult to convince the 12- or 13-year-old girl that she will come to be proud of her height and her good figure as she grows older, it is far easier to prevent poor posture habits than to correct them once they are formed.

Parents can accomplish a great deal in this direction merely by helping the girl choose clothes suitable to her type, and, so far as possible, sufficiently attractive to make her confident that she looks well. They can also help greatly by softening some of the inevitable jibes of thoughtless brothers and sisters (or, indeed, by encouraging these members of the family to be more considerate) and most of all, by helping the girl to see her good points and gain enough self-confidence not only to take brotherly criticism good-naturedly but to make the best of her figure as it is.

Self-consciousness over an unhealthy and unsightly complexion is even more likely to give parents cause for anxiety. Skin eruptions are fairly common during early adolescence. The small ducts through which oil is carried to the skin apparently do not grow fast enough to take care of the increased activity of the glands supplying this secretion, and, as a result, they become stopped up and a comedo, or "blackhead", forms at the opening of the duct. As the glands continue to function even though drainage is blocked, the ducts become overfilled and little raised places, or "pimples", begin to appear on the surface of the skin.

It is unfortunate that just at the time when the growing child's skin is perhaps in need of a little added care he is most tempted by chocolates, candy bars, cookies, ice-cream sundaes, and soda-fountain drinks, and possibly most careless about keeping his digestive system in healthy order. Skin specialists have found that proper attention to the fundamental principles of physical hygiene already referred to, wholesome diet, free elimination, plenty of sunshine and out-of-door exercise, and thorough daily or twice-daily washing with warm water and soap (which is not nearly so harmful to the complexion as many adolescents believe) will keep most young complexions in good condition. When the skin fails to respond well to this routine, more vigorous measures under the direction of a physician are advisable. It is well known, however, that proper attention to the skin in the early stages of these afflictions can prevent development of the unsightly later stages for which medical treatment may be necessary.

But in spite of our best efforts we cannot eliminate all the sources of unhappy self-consciousness during adolescence, and therefore we might well spend some of our effort in helping young people acquire a philosophy of life which will make their burdens bearable. The need for this is well illustrated in Mattie's case.

Mattie was in the seventh grade when her life began to be miserable because of her complexion. She had always been rather thin and pale. Although she would have been described as plain, she was not unattractive until her face began to be disfigured by numerous unsightly blemishes. She washed harder than ever, tried to be discreet in her diet, and, on her mother's suggestion, began taking various cathartics, but still her face continued to be covered with blackheads and pimples.

Daily scrutiny before a mirror had made Mattie so unhappy about her appearance that she became extremely sensitive to any fancied slights from her schoolmates. She suspected that some of them avoided her because they found her face repulsive. All this unhappiness was, however, greatly increased when some one called her "Miss Pimples."

Mattie now began to suspect that some of the other children were calling her "Miss Pimples," and she went about in a self-conscious, unhappy way. Then a schoolmate with whom she had been friendly gave a party and failed to invite her and even let it be known that Mattie had been left out because of her pimples.

This example, perhaps, shows the schoolmate as unfeeling. But the fact remains that the world has its share of such unfeeling individuals, who derive some compensatory satisfaction from calling attention to the defects and weaknesses of others. There are always some who find their joy in imitating the limp of a lame person or the speech impediment of a stammerer, who take pleasure in calling attention to the shy and retiring individual, and think it amusing to point out directly or indirectly the physical, mental, or social imperfections and inferiorities which they themselves do not have. To meet these attacks requires courage and a greater indifference to pain than most adolescents possess. For it is through the experience of pain that individuals develop a philosophy of life which permits them to endure suffering, and in early adolescence most boys and girls have not yet had sufficient experience to endure pain easily.

Pointing out the burdens of other people does little to make the adolescent's burdens more bearable. Discoursing on the injustices of life adds little sweetness to the adolescent's own suffering. Perhaps the most that can be done to help him is to encourage him to see his strong points and build his philosophy of life around these rather than around his weaknesses; and then to help him gain a little perspective, so that even though the tribulations of today loom largest, he will not completely lose sight of the fact that tomorrow and the next day and the next still hold promise of brightness.

## ATTITUDES TOWARD SEX

If we are wise enough and grown-up enough ourselves, we can give the adolescent an interpretation of sex and human behavior that will enable him to face frankly his own cravings and inferiorities, real or imagined, and to adjust to them in a positive, constructive spirit. (Taft, Jessie: *Mental-Hygiene Problems of Normal Adolescence*. *Mental Hygiene*, vol. 5, no. 4 (October 1921), pp. 741-751.)

Notwithstanding the fact that sex is a subject which causes parents a great deal of concern, not only during the adolescent period but also during the earlier years, there is always danger of over-stressing these problems by featuring the subject and danger of creating a panic where nothing more than intelligent interest, keen observation, and ordinary wisdom is needed. For this reason much that has to be said about this subject is being presented as it naturally comes up in the discussions of physical growth and development, personal relationships, and work and leisure-time activities. This section, therefore, is intended only as general background from which may be obtained a common point of view on the subject.

It is now generally recognized that the methods in vogue a quarter of a century back which attempted to prevent undesirable sex conduct by keeping young people in ignorance and subjecting them to rigid disciplinary measures, were neither wise nor effective and that the results of such methods were more harmful than the indiscretions which they were intended to prevent. In other words, more real harm may come from the worry, anxiety, fear, and feelings of guilt and inferiority caused by unwise efforts on the part of the parent to prevent or stop an undesirable sex practice than from the practice itself. This does not mean that the subject should be ignored and that indulgences of this kind should be permitted to go on without parental interference. It does indicate, however, that sex instruction should be frank, honest, and in keeping with the facts. No attempt should be made to bolster up good, sound advice with statements of dangers which, in the first place, may not exist and, in the second place, serve no other purpose than the creation of unreasonable fears that actually harm the individual at the time and may well become handicaps to him later in life.

## SEX INSTRUCTION

Just as training in the habits of physical hygiene for adolescence should be a continuation of the training of early childhood, so in-



struction in the nature and function of the reproductive organs and the part that sex plays in the life of the growing human being should be a continuation of earlier sex instruction. In other words, the parent should not think of adolescence as the time for a campaign in physical hygiene and sex instruction. For just as habits of physical hygiene, either good or bad, are formed long before adolescence, so sex information, either good or bad, is picked up by most children before puberty. The parent who thinks that the child who does not discuss these things is ignorant of them should be warned that the child's very silence may indicate a greater knowledge than he cares to share with his parent.

In Child Management (United States Children's Bureau Publication No. 143) parents were advised to give "clear, frank answers suited to the child's intelligence and development" on all questions of sex. When this practice is followed, it may well happen that by the time a child reaches adolescence, particularly if he is brought up intimately with older children, he has asked for all the information he needs. But the parents should by no means feel obliged to wait for the child's questions when they see that rapid development is taking place. They can easily notice the body changes already described and remind or point out to the child that these are signs that he is passing from childhood to adulthood.

The father can, perhaps, discuss these matters most helpfully with the boy. He should prepare him to expect an occasional discharge of semen, likely to occur during sleep, explaining that this is nature's way of taking care of his sex activity until he should be physically, economically, and socially ready to assume the responsibility of mating, and assuring him that these "nocturnal emissions", as well as the involuntary "erections" he may experience either in sleep or in sexually exciting situations, are perfectly natural occurrences about which he should feel no alarm. He should also advise the boy that he is less likely to be disturbed by these experiences if he leads a vigorous life, finding pleasure and perhaps a certain pride in hard work and play, cool and regular sleep, cold baths, and wholesome interests.

The mother's instruction should prepare the girl for the occurrence of menstruation, explaining its purpose in relation to child-bearing and advising her how to care for herself during her monthly periods. The girl should also be given some understanding of her sex reactions. She should be reassured, for instance, regarding the vaginal discharge she may experience in situations that are in some way sexually stimulating to her. She should also have an understanding of the sex tension and urge which, although less obvious and less clearly recognized than in the boy, may, nevertheless, be dis-

turbing. She has a right to know that her days of excessive irritability or restlessness or emotional instability are due, not to the minor annoyances of everyday life which would ordinarily not upset her, nor to any inherent disagreeableness or crossness, but to the physiological tension which is a part of every mature and normal woman's sex life. Once they are recognized, she can learn to relieve her feelings of pent-up emotion and energy by entering into suitable activities. Instead of battling blindly with something she does not understand, she will be able to seek deliberately for a satisfactory means of expression. Her outlet may be in tennis, or swimming, or cleaning the porches, or mowing the lawn: she may crave doing something physically strenuous and should be helped to find it; or she may have need for a purely emotional outlet and may find it best in music, in dramatics, or in writing. When she finds a satisfactory outlet, she should be allowed to make the most of it, regardless of how skillful she may be. It is more important that she find an enjoyable and helpful means of expression than that she become a good performer. As time goes on, she will find new outlets: simple, happy companionship with a group of young people, engrossing work, intensive study, and service for others will all help her to satisfy her growing emotional and physical tension until she is ready to enter into a mature sex relationship and assume the responsibilities of wifehood and motherhood.

Both the boy and the girl should be told not only about the organs and processes of reproduction in their own sex, but also about those of the other sex. Above all, they should be made to feel free to ask any questions or consult their parents about any feelings or experiences which they find puzzling or disturbing.

Parents who feel that they do not know enough about these matters to explain them to their children may find it well to discuss them first with each other and with their family physician. They may also get help from various books describing the physiology of reproduction and suggesting ways in which parents can explain it to their children. If for some reason they still feel unable to tackle the subject, they should arrange to have the family physician confer with the child or recommend something to be read by the child himself. Although by this method they will probably lose the rather precious experiences that come to the parent who is on an intimate, confidential level with his child, they will at least not fail the child as they would by neglecting this matter entirely.

Some parents are inclined to feel that the importance of sex instruction—and, indeed, of all aspects of child care and guidance—is greatly exaggerated. They believe that they, and many of their friends, grew up to be competent men and women without any so-

called habit training or careful sex instruction. But even if they can recall no anxieties, doubts, shocks, or unhappy experiences which they might have been spared with wise guidance, they will surely be able to see that the very changes which they and their generation have made in the world are creating the need for changed methods of bringing up the next generation.

As civilization speeds up, there is an increase not only in life's conveniences, comforts, and pleasures, but also in its dangers. Automobiles, for example, contribute greatly to man's convenience, comfort, and pleasure, but they also greatly increase the accidents causing disability and death: motion pictures add to our sources of amusement, but they may also give the growing child premature and undesirable ideas concerning the relations between men and women. This does not mean that all automobiles and all motion pictures should be condemned. It does mean, however, that parents who are fond of their children will teach them to cross the streets carefully as soon as they begin to go out alone: and, in the same spirit, as soon as the children are likely to come in contact with sex attitudes, through motion pictures, books, companions, or other forms of observation and experience, the parents will want to help them get a sane and healthy outlook on this part of life.

### SEX TALK AND READING

Parents, as well as teachers and recreation leaders, are frequently alarmed at the sexual precociousness displayed in the conversations of some of their worldly wise children, or concerned, and possibly offended, by what they consider "smutty" or "dirty" talk. Their concern and alarm increase when they discover that these conversations are traveling far and wide among the younger population and that indignant parents are complaining of having their children contaminated.

The child's motive in indulging in such conversation may be merely a response to a lively healthy curiosity and a desire for information. If he is already well supplied with information and has not been made to feel that it is particularly private or personal, he may have a generous inclination to pass it along or to show off his superior knowledge to those of his companions who are less well informed. When the conversation tends to be a recital of romantic adventures or shameless exploits, the motive is likely to be a desire for attention and prestige. The child is endeavoring to impress his young audience with his own supposed experience in mature sex activities. Such, at least, are the most common motives for sex conversation in the child from 6 to 10 years of age.

The crudeness of language means nothing to the child. The so-called vulgar and obscene expressions serve exactly the same purpose to him as the more refined and scientific vocabulary would serve in a discussion at a medical conference. So the terms and the ideas which they convey need not cause any particular alarm. The concern should rather be over the fact that these youngsters oftentimes have not so much information as misinformation to hand out and discuss, so that after it is all over they are left pondering over the subject with their natural, normal, healthy curiosity unsatisfied. This leads to daydreams and fantasies which in themselves are likely to be sexually more stimulating than the talk. For this reason it is of the utmost importance that the child be able to regard his parent as a source of information always available, where curiosity can be adequately satisfied whenever aroused.

Even after the boy and girl reach puberty, and long after they have acquired an intellectual understanding of sex and its relation to much of their social activity, they may still utilize sex talk, obscene words, smutty stories, and recitals of personal experiences (often without a foundation in fact) as a means of "putting themselves across." In addition, however, they begin to derive from their conversations a vicarious sex thrill—first through the visual and verbal stimulation of an imagined experience and secondly through the excitement of participating in a conversation that would be frowned upon, if not actually forbidden, by their elders.

That this may develop into a recognizable problem and therefore merits intelligent handling may be seen from the following example:

*Alvin* was on the verge of being expelled from high school, for although he was a good student, a fair athlete, and a natural leader he was constantly being reported to the principal because of his smutty conversation. His stories were always floating around the corridors, the wash rooms, the locker rooms, the showers, and, in fact, any corner where he might draw a private audience. In spite of several warnings he continued with his obscene chatter until the principal began to conclude that this boy was really "foul-minded" and was a bad influence in the school.

In spite of the sophisticated stories this boy was telling it became clear in one frank conversation with him that he was amazingly ignorant of the elementary facts of sex. Since earliest childhood he had had great curiosity regarding anatomical differences between boys and girls, the process of birth, the behavior of animals, and the sensations of his own body. When he had approached his parents with questions he had been told that this was a subject not to be discussed by children. His father had been particularly remote, making him feel that he was much too young and too unimportant to have any thoughts worthy of serious consideration. Alvin accepted this attitude and made no further inroads on his father's time and attention, but he did not give up his search for information.

It soon became one of his favorite pastimes to hunt for the answers to his questions. But the garbled ideas of his companions and the vague discussions in books merely served to excite his curiosity further. At the same time he

began to discover that such information as he had picked up and pieced together proved interesting to others; sometimes he would be able to shock them and sometimes to amuse them; sometimes he would embarrass and sometimes entertain his audience, all depending on their own degree of sophistication. But always he would provoke their interest and attention. So he continued to use this method of making himself interesting and added new spiciness to his tales lest he lose prestige.

This became such a habit with Alvin that he failed to realize as he grew older that some of his companions would have liked him just as well, or even better, if he had dropped some of his obscenities. They were as much disgusted by his vulgar habits of conversation as they would have been by vulgar eating or toilet habits in a 16-year-old boy. They were ashamed to have him visit at their homes and unwilling to invite him to any of their parties.

Alvin was himself rather disgusted and ashamed when he finally began to realize how his conversation must have sounded to boys who had received better instruction than he and had a better understanding of his stories than he had. He was interested in the discovery, too, that his conversation was but a bid for attention and popularity, which he might seek to better advantage by his skill, for example, in some of his favorite sports.

The method of handling these problems depends on the type of individual concerned. It is useless in any case to appear shocked and horrified, or to resort to tears or anger. It is far better to let the immature youngster know that we understand just what this activity means to him and why he is seeking to gain recognition in this particular way. The fact that people in general consider this line of conversation vulgar and offensive, just as they would bad manners, may be pointed out to him, and at the same time other ways of getting recognition may be suggested. With the younger group a frank talk on the subject of sex, making it interesting and unemotional, does more good than anything else. It gives them a new and more responsible attitude toward keeping the whole subject of sex clean.

The older adolescents will recognize that young people who specialize in sex talk usually have no other way of making themselves interesting. Such individuals would rather be criticized and censured than ignored. As a 9-year old once said of another boy of his own age who was always talking smut, "He is the dirtiest and the weakest boy in school. I can lick him with one hand."

Most children do pass through this phase of using more or less obscene language, just as they pass through phases of making grimaces or tiresome noises. It requires considerable patience to live through all these various phases with equanimity, but even the period of obscenity should not call forth parental excitement. An unemotional attitude and a certain amount of understanding of what the child is driving at are more helpful than either wrath or sorrow.

Much of the discussion concerning sex talk applies also to the reading of erotic literature. The danger in this type of lurid litera-

ture lies in the fact that much of it portrays situations which are overdrawn and not actually representative of reality as these boys and girls will experience it. There is always a sufficient amount of literature available which serves the purpose of diverting sex interests into other channels without stimulating sex phantasies and creating further problems, and both the schools and the public libraries should offer every assistance to parents and to the adolescents themselves in finding books that are worth while.

### MASTURBATION

The practice of handling or otherwise stimulating the genitals is not limited to adolescents. Most young children make the discovery either in the course of exploring their bodies, playing some game, or under the influence of other children or unscrupulous adults, that certain parts of their bodies respond more pleasurably than others to touch, and for a brief time at least, during this early period of "sexual awareness" they may innocently experiment with these new sensations. It is important to discourage this practice in general by keeping the genitals clean and the clothing comfortable, by carefully supervising the child's visits to the toilet, by being familiar with all his associated and well informed as to his activities in various places and at various times of the day, and on specific occasions by diverting him from the practice to some other activity or interest without letting him feel self-conscious or ashamed. (See *Child Management*, p. 31.)

The practice of masturbation is encountered so frequently, however, in normal, healthy boys and girls from the preschool age through adolescence that there is no logical reason why everything possible should not be done to allay parental concern about the habit. The real harm results from the treatment of the habit which is likely to be instituted when parents become emotionally upset. The parent is likely to think only in terms of the possible dire physical effects the habit may have upon the human organism, quite unmindful that the real danger lies in making the child feel self-conscious and inferior, and in leading him to turn all his thoughts upon his supposed wickedness and abnormality. This tendency to introspective self-examination and self-condemnation in turn affects his attitude toward the world at large; he avoids mingling with others, feeling unworthy of their society and perhaps fearing lest they suspect and discover his weakness. His normal, healthy outlook on life becomes distorted.

There is probably no surer way of perpetuating such a habit than that of making the individual feel that he is sinful, different, queer, and wicked, or will become physically degenerate, an object to be avoided, and a candidate for a mental hospital through his indiscretions. What he needs is relief from anxiety, not more

anxiety; a feeling of strength and superiority, not of weakness and inferiority; truth, not lies. The adolescent already feels that he is a victim of an undesirable habit. He knows that any habit which makes him think less well of himself is something to be fought and mastered. He is already carrying a heavy burden. A panicky parent should not add to it by injecting fears which have no basis in fact merely because this seems to be the easiest way to meet the situation.

Undesirable sex behavior need not be either ignored or condemned. When it comes to the parents' attention as a problem of one of their own children, they should seize the opportunity for a frank discussion of the whole subject of sex and the varied healthy activities that may be utilized as substitutes for this immature sex behavior. If the parents cannot approach the subject in this intellectual and unemotional way, they should delegate the task to the family physician, a wise teacher, a friend, or some other suitable person who would help rather than hinder the adolescent in his attempt to get a mature outlook on sex conduct. This is not the time for evasion, prudery, or deceit; it is the time for frank, honest approach to one of the most common problems adolescents have to face.

The insidious way in which poor handling of this problem may give rise to conflicts interfering with the individual's physical and mental well-being may be seen in the following story of a 15-year old boy:

*Dennis* had a problem of sleeplessness which worried his parents so much that they finally consulted a physician. For 2 years he had been wakeful at night, though, so far as his parents knew, there was nothing the matter with him. They had always regarded his sleeplessness as a bad habit acquired through his interest in reading in bed; but as the boy grew older and the habit continued and as it became obvious that he was in need of more sleep, they felt increasingly anxious about him.

Dennis' father was a busy clergyman. He had given his son very little sex instruction, and his attitude toward the subject had not encouraged the boy to discuss his thoughts and experiences with him. He told his son "the dangers of self-abuse" and gave most of his sex instruction in terms of what not to do.

Unfortunately Dennis had already been initiated into the practice of masturbation by one of his companions before his father had got around to telling him how "evil" and "dangerous" this indulgence is. Immediately following his father's talk with him, the boy became very anxious.

He entertained the idea that he had committed some unpardonable sin, that he had ruined his health, and that everybody could tell that he was in the grip of this habit. He plunged himself into a variety of activities which allowed him to forget his problem during the day, but at night he would be haunted by fears of the terrible results which he would eventually suffer from his indulgences. His fears, however, did not help him to overcome the habit; in fact, the habit was the only way he could give momentary relief to his anxious mind and put an end to his struggle with sleeplessness.

A perfectly frank discussion of the whole subject of sex and its function was a revelation to the boy. It gave him a new lease on life and permitted him to think of himself and compare himself with others without need for torturing self-condemnation. This well-meaning father might well have sown the seeds for a real catastrophe in the life of this boy had not some relief been administered by presenting to him a true picture of the normal stages of development.

It is not always necessary for parents to pry into the sex activity of their children and get confessions of these secret indulgences. The whole sex problem can be discussed quite as frankly in an impersonal way and often more helpfully than the individual problem. It is wise for parents to let children appreciate that these situations are not particularly uncommon, that most boys have to meet them, and that there is little cause for undue alarm. At the same time they do well to stress the fact that solitary preoccupation with one's own body for the purpose of obtaining pleasurable sensations is an immature form of behavior, that immature sex habits tend to interfere with one's normal adjustment to other people, and that any habit which tends to lessen one's self-esteem should be discarded. Then ways and means of meeting the situation can be outlined, and there will be a much better chance of the plan's being carried through by the boy whose self-esteem has been restored than by the boy who is in the grip of fear.

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Having looked into some of the aspects of sex behavior that are likely to trouble parents, let us now look back for a moment at the subject of sex in general. Sex is not a problem; it is one of the many aspects of normal life. Like the physical, emotional, and intellectual aspects of life, it passes through various normal stages of development. In the course of this development there may be physical awkwardness, emotional turmoil, intellectual doubts and misgivings, and times of unusual sex awareness, all of which serve to let the organism know that growth is taking place. The normal adolescent learns to adjust his life to all these changes. There is no need to make him feel that adolescence is a kind of battleground or that he will be forever fighting his cravings for sex experiences.

In the end the sex behavior of the adolescent boy and girl is determined to a large extent by their whole adjustment to life. If their relationships with their parents and their friends are satisfactory and happy, and they have adequate outlets for their various energies and interests, they are likely to meet their maturing sex drives adequately. It is the emotionally starved boy or girl or the adolescent without adequate interests who is most likely to plunge into experimentation with sex for the satisfaction which he has failed to find in ways more in keeping with his stage of development.



## ADOLESCENCE AND MENTAL DEVELOPMENT

Individuals are frequently so topheavy with brightness and academic conceit that they are worth less in the economic market than a well-trained adult with the mentality of a 10-year-old child. (Richards, Esther Loring, M.D.: *Behaviour Aspects of Child Conduct*, p. 16. Macmillan Co., New York, 1932.)

Mental development is not nearly so easy to observe as physical development. Any mother can see that her young daughter is outgrowing her sweaters and skirts and dresses and that her young son is getting too tall for short trousers; and the boy and girl can add to this evidence of growth by pointing to last year's notch on the measuring tree or figuring out the gain in actual inches and pounds. But when it comes to mental development, units and standards of measurement are lacking. The parent may realize that the son or daughter has a more grown-up outlook on life; and the son and daughter may realize that they are able to do more advanced school work, but they would all find it more difficult to measure this growth in terms of mental inches or pounds.

Mind is thought of in terms of processes and activities, and it is naturally less easy to measure these than to measure body stature. Moreover, the various mental processes and activities develop at different times and different rates. It has been found that while many of them increase during adolescence, some remain about the same and some actually decrease. Nor can it be said that mental development ceases with adolescence. Indeed a well-known university extension department recently stated in one of its advertisements that adults over 25 learn more rapidly than adolescents between the ages of 15 and 20.

But, regardless of the fact that there is no sudden noticeable mental growth during adolescence, many people become more interested in the mental development of boys and girls at this time. They begin to consider a little more seriously how far they can go in school and to what advantage; what they are best fitted to do vocationally; and, in general, what their special capacities and special disabilities are. Obviously these are questions that can be answered only after careful study of the individual boy or girl. But for those lay readers who would like a better understanding of some of the factors involved in such a study the following discussion may be of some value.

## MEASUREMENT OF INTELLIGENCE

Within the last 20 years a large number and variety of so-called "tests" for the measurement of various mental processes have been devised. There are tests of memory, perception, attention, motor coordination, comprehension, suggestibility, judgment, imagination, range of emotional response, learning ability, initiative, and so on. Some of these tests have proved unsatisfactory; they have been found to reveal acquired learning rather than native ability or to make insufficient allowance for environmental factors or differences of personality. But through their continued use in large numbers of cases and through comparison of the resulting scores with such ordinary standards of judgment as school grades and personal impressions, a number of very useful tests have been developed. They are being used throughout the world for purposes of classifying children in schools, making vocational plans and recommendations, studying the special problems of individual children, and carrying on experiments in various fields of research. Essentially they do nothing more than sample the various intellectual processes; each sample is then scored, and the intelligence as a whole is estimated on the basis of the total score.

The individual's score may be rated in comparison with that of his fellow classmates, to give an estimate of his class rank, or it may be computed in terms of the ratio between his mental age, as determined in the test, and his chronological age in years and months, to give his intelligence quotient (I.Q.).

*Duncan* was 10 years and 11 months of age when he was tested. He was given the usual tests for the average 5-year old, the 6-year old, and the 7-year old. He could do most of the 5-year items and some of the 6-year items but failed practically all the 7-year items. In actual points he scored a mental age of 5 years and 7 months.

It is apparent that a child almost 11 years of age with the mental development of a child between 5 and 6 years of age must be mentally retarded. The I.Q. is a convenient way of telling how much he is retarded, for *Duncan's* I.Q. would be 51 as compared with the normal I.Q. of 100.

Thus when the mental age is below the chronological age, the child may be said to be in varying degrees slow or retarded; when the two are equal, the child may be said to be average; when the mental age is above the chronological age, the child may be looked upon as accelerated or superior. To be sure, a range of 10 points more or less must be allowed for possible error due to factors not under control. But, in a general way, the boy or girl can thus be classified in relation to the great numbers of boys and girls of the same age who have been similarly tested.

In order to be of any use such intelligence testing must be done by well-trained people who have had wide experience with growing chil-

dren under test conditions. Moreover the test results must be interpreted in the light of the norms established by tests in the past. *Even then the test should not be regarded as the last word and final verdict regarding the child.* On the contrary, it should be considered only as a point of departure to be supplemented by his medical history, consideration of his environmental limitations and opportunities, a history of his actual school achievement and his social adjustment, and further study of such particular aptitudes or handicaps as he may manifest.

It is of greatest importance that parents understand the nature of this type of intelligence test. The interesting publicity given in recent years to various kinds of "mental testing" has had the unfortunate effect of confusing and misleading lay readers as to the purpose of psychological examination before they ever had a chance to understand what it was all about. It is perfectly true that psychologists and criminologists have been working out tests for the purpose of discovering guilt reactions in individuals suspected of lying, stealing, and other delinquencies and offenses. It is also true that psychiatrists and psychologists have been working out tests for the purpose of discovering abnormal emotional reactions as an aid to establishing a diagnosis of insanity. But these tests are as distinct from the ordinary intelligence tests as laboratory tests for the presence of tuberculosis are distinct from the routine weighing and measuring done in the public schools. Parents sometimes ask whether the intelligence tests given to their children are not the same as those used to determine whether or not a child is feeble-minded, and no doubt they feel that if this is the case they do not wish their children to be contaminated by such a procedure. They forget that there is only one kind of scale for weighing overweight, underweight, and average-weight human beings and that it is no disgrace to be found of normal weight on the same scale which showed someone else to be overweight or underweight.

So much for the nature of intelligence tests. Now let us consider their application.

### THE SLOW MIND

In this bulletin no attempt will be made to deal with the problems of the defective or severely retarded individual, first because this discussion is limited to the problems of normal adolescents and, secondly, because the problems of the defective boy or girl must ordinarily be met and dealt with before the time of adolescence. The problems of the mentally slow child, on the other hand, are often not recognized until he reaches the upper grades.

*Eric* had entered school at the age of 6 and, by plodding along diligently, had managed to reach the fifth grade at the age of 12. It was obvious that he

was not doing particularly well at school; yet he seemed to have an excellent memory and to be clever in the use of his hands, and therefore his mediocre work was attributed simply to "poor concentration" and "lack of attention."

Eric was an obedient child and apparently happy. Consequently no one worried about his poor work until his fifth-grade teacher was obliged to demote him to the fourth grade. Eric seemed quite indifferent to this procedure, and his parents began to wonder what the trouble could be.

A psychological examination revealed that Eric's mental age was fully 2 years below his chronological age; in other words, he was not mentally ready for fifth-grade work. His good memory had helped him to acquire a considerable store of general information, which up to this point had covered up his helplessness in working out new problems and grasping new situations.

Eric's parents accepted these facts, and instead of trying to push their son beyond his capacity in an effort to have him keep in step with the boys of his age, they undertook to find out more about his particular liabilities and assets. Next they set about to learn all they could concerning the types of vocation which would be open to him and in which he could use his manual skill, his perseverance, his cooperative spirit, and his other assets to the best advantage and to his own greater happiness. They took an eager interest in his plans for getting the necessary vocational training. Instead of preparing for disappointment over Eric's inability to acquire a college degree, they prepared themselves to take pleasure and pride in such work as would ultimately provide their son with opportunities for success and happiness.

This story of Eric illustrates three important principles to be observed by parents and teachers in planning for the boy or girl with a slow mind: (1) The necessity of giving frank and early recognition to whatever handicap he may have; (2) the importance of placing him properly in school so that he will not have to struggle beyond his capacity, or constantly experience a sense of discouragement and failure; (3) the wisdom of planning for the child's greatest satisfaction and happiness rather than for the fulfillment of parental ambition.

### THE AVERAGE MIND

It would seem as if the youngster with an average mind would be the last to require any special consideration and that life would present no special problems to him nor to his parents, but it is the nature of man never to be content with his lot. Nor can it be denied that when the individual with an average mind is obliged to compete with a group of individuals having superior minds, he is at as great a disadvantage as 12-year-old Eric would have been in the fifth or sixth grade. This is well illustrated by Adeline's predicament.

*Adeline* was 10 years and 2 months of age and was in the fifth grade of a good private school. Her teachers were not satisfied with her work and, thinking that she might be mentally retarded, suggested that she be given a psychological examination. The psychologist found her to have a mental

age of 11 years and an I.Q. of 108, indicative of a good average mind. This was reported to the school, but the principal's reply was in effect as follows: Adeline's I.Q. of 108 might well be considered eight points above the norm according to some standards; but, inasmuch as the majority of children in this private school had an I.Q. of 120 or higher, Adeline's I.Q. of 108 had to be considered below average. In other words, she was competing with a group of superior children who were naturally setting too fast a pace for her. It was, of course, advisable to transfer her to a school in which she could hold her own with fifth-graders who were more nearly her equal.

"Average", like "inferior" and "superior", is but a relative term; and the individual who is average as compared to the general population or to the standard test scale is no longer average when compared to a selected group who, by reason of their superiority, are going on to special schools and colleges. Even within the family group, the individual with average ability may seem inferior. This is well illustrated in the following case<sup>1</sup>:

Warren was a boy with an "average" mental equipment. He went through the elementary grades without any special difficulty and was standing above the middle of his class when he finished the sixth grade at the age of 11½ years. He began to slump in the seventh grade, and by the time he had reached the eighth grade his work had become so poor and was done so carelessly that his father had to begin helping him at home.

Warren's father was a clergyman. Little is known about the early relation between father and son. The mother reported that on one occasion the father had cried out impatiently something about Warren's being a "stupid" fellow who never could learn anything. She attached considerable importance to this and thought it accounted for his feeling of inferiority.

It was not until Warren entered high school, however, that the trouble became acute. His father's own description of this experience is most enlightening:

"Warren's first year in high school was very bad for him. He was taking the college-preparatory course. I gave him constant attention, assisting him with his Latin and algebra, and, toward the end of the year, with his ancient history. He did his English by himself, but I think he would have failed in this if his teacher had set proper standards. In March he became very nervous, and it was evident that he could not carry all the work. He dropped his Latin and, by dint of personal attention from me, succeeded in getting through the rest of his studies.

"He spent the summer at camp and did very well, winning the camp letter and passing the Junior Red Cross life-saving test.

"In the fall he returned again to the local high school.

"It soon became evident that he could not carry the work without a great deal of help. He was very greatly discouraged and nervous. When I worked with him he would get 'nerved up.' It was wearing on me. At this point his mother took things practically into her own hands and made arrangements for him to go to a private school.

"He appears to have been very happy and to have behaved well, but he has failed most of his subjects."

<sup>1</sup>Thom, Douglas A.: *Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems*, pp. 89-91, D. Appleton & Co., New York, 1932.

The father's letter then continues with a revealing description of the boy's behavior:

"One of the marked features of his case is that he refers to himself as a 'dumbbell' and says that he will never amount to anything. One night this June, after he had been at home for about 2 weeks, he had a bitter crying spell about his failure in school and said that he would have to go off and live as a hermit for the rest of his life, as he could not be of any use in the world.

"He teases his younger brothers and that has many times led to bad quarrels. At times he has exasperated me almost to distraction by his insolence. I used to give him corporal punishment, and I have at times struck him in anger. I am fully aware that I have not always dealt calmly and wisely with him.

"Since he has been back from New Hampshire, he has been working in a local store, using an adding machine and doing miscellaneous clerical work. So far he has not been discharged. He seems happy in this work and likes both his superiors and his associates.

"So far as we know, he is clean morally. He does not smoke."

This serves, perhaps, to suggest enough of the father's attitude. His letter continues for several more pages in the same vein. He is chagrined to the limits of his power of self-control that he, a man who has always set great store by intellectual accomplishments and was always successful in his own scholastic endeavors, would have so stupid and dull a son!

He is puzzled, as well as chagrined. Why should this have happened? Is he to blame? Possibly he has been too severe with the boy? Yet he has helped him with his lessons; he has sent him to camp for several summers; he has had his tonsils removed; he has had him examined annually by a specialist in preventive medicine; and he has had him tested annually, since the age of 12, by a consulting psychologist who recommended the college-preparatory course. Something must be wrong with him. He suggests several possibilities. Instruments had been used on his head at birth. Could this have affected his mind? He had had diphtheria and colitis as a young child. Would either of these contribute to his present condition? He had not yet developed sexually as far as other boys of his age. Could this be an important factor? Or was his behavior indicative of some nervous or mental disorder?

The one explanation which does not suggest itself to him or which he refuses to admit, is that his son may have been born with no more than average mental ability and that his own critical, overambitious, and extremely emotional attitude has aroused such conflicts in the boy that he is unable to make the best use of even his limited ability.

The principles to be observed in guiding the adolescent with average ability are but variations of those to be observed in planning for the child with the slow mind: (1) The necessity of recognizing the child's ability for what it is; (2) the importance of placing him properly in school so that his powers will be developed to their maximum fulfillment and yet not subjected to competition that would lead only to failure; and (3) the wisdom of guiding the child toward his own satisfaction and happiness rather than toward the goal set by parental ambition.

## THE SUPERIOR MIND

That the mentally superior child may perplex his parents and become a problem to himself is a not uncommon assumption. People have innumerable theories about the vagaries of children with superior endowment. They may be convinced that brilliant children are usually poor specimens so far as physical development is concerned; or that they are inclined to be introspective, absent-minded bookworms with no sense about practical matters; or that they are selfish, egocentric individuals who are ever greedy for more learning and more college degrees regardless of the economic cost to their parents or the necessary sacrifice of the aspirations of brothers and sisters; or that gifted children turn out to be dull adults; or that highly intellectual boys and girls make poor social adjustments and later become the crochety, cantankerous, neurotic, or psychotic members of society. Nor are these theories and beliefs drawn from thin air. They have their basis in practically everyday observation and experience. Everyone knows men and women whom the above descriptions would seem to fit perfectly. None the less, the conclusion that their maladjustments, their faults, and their failures are due to, or necessarily connected with, intellectual superiority is fallacious.

Terman's recent studies of intellectually superior children all tend to show that true intellectual superiority is usually accompanied by superiority in other respects, as, for example, physical health and social adaptability. If these boys and girls later turn out to be lopsided, topheavy, or otherwise unbalanced individuals, does the fault lie in their intellectual superiority in itself? Does it not rather lie in the fact that they have been encouraged by ambitious parents and eager teachers to spend all their time and energy in developing their intellects to the exclusion of their other faculties? Perhaps poverty has made it necessary for them to be self-supporting while receiving their education, so that all the time not spent in class or at study has been spent at work, and little, if any, time has been left for leisurely companionship with fellow students, or for participation in sports, in group activities, or in any other form of play and recreation. Possibly they have come from a family whose social background is markedly inferior to that of their intellectual equals, so that they have always felt unable to enjoy the intimate companionship of the very people with whom they might otherwise have had most in common. All these factors, and more, have undoubtedly contributed to the maladjustments of some highly endowed individuals. A specific instance will illustrate this situation.

Nick was only 12 when he entered high school. He was a little shaver with a sweet, baby face—the kind of youngster who is promptly designated as “cute” and accepted as a pet by teachers and classmates alike. His superior intelligence had been amply appreciated by his grade-school teachers, who had pushed him rapidly ahead, much to the satisfaction of his parents, and his high-school enrollment was looked upon as a dramatic event.

In the small grade school, where no sharp dividing line existed between grades as such, Nick had managed to have a pretty good time. There were always boys of his size and interests on the playground, and he had his neighborhood pals. The matter of his being a grade or two ahead of some of his chums gave him a little added prestige when it came to club elections, but he still remained “one of the bunch.”

On entering high school Nick gradually found himself cut off from his old associates. He could no longer walk home from school with them; he sometimes had algebra or Latin assignments to do when the “gang” were getting together for some activity; he had to attend a high school class meeting or a game on the night when the old club had its meeting; and then, even when he did see them he was, after all, a high-school boy and no longer one of them. To be sure, the logical step would have been for Nick now to throw in his lot with the high-school group. But physically he was small even for his age and could not well compete with his classmates on the football field or in the gymnasium. He received cordial invitations to various clubs, but he was petted and teased and shown off and it was obvious that no matter how much he was liked he was not accepted as an equal.

Then the work itself proved taxing; for although he had a superior mind, he was still a little boy in many ways and was not yet ready to settle down to concentrated effort on conjugations and declensions, though he knew that high marks were expected of him.

He came through the first year creditably enough. But the second year was bad from the very start. People had become accustomed to the novelty of seeing this “cute little fellow” in their midst and no longer made such a fuss about him. Moreover, he was beginning to grow a little, and as new freshmen came he was no longer such an unusual figure. He had not had a chance to make a real place for himself in athletics or outside activities during the first year and, therefore, had little to offer as a bid for popularity the second. One day, in an effort to win recognition as a “regular fellow”, he accepted a dare to smoke. The after effects were bad, the whole affair became a joke, and for a while life seemed pretty burdensome. Nick found himself with nothing but hard work to do and there was no satisfaction in it, especially as his marks fell lower and lower.

Modern American educators and psychologists seem to agree that it is far wiser to enrich the course of the superior child than to push him ahead. If Nick’s physical development had been as greatly advanced as his intellectual development, probably the promotion to high school would have proved an easy and pleasant experience. In view of his small size and his general immaturity it would have been far better, however, to let him take the last few grades at school more slowly, with additional work in outside reading, as for instance, in ancient history, in folklore and mythology, in biography, in the history of art and music, or in the sciences. Some schools definitely



plan for such extensions of their curriculum, adding projects to be worked out in class providing adequate activity and stimulation for the bright boy and girl. Even when this is not provided by the school, parents can often guide and direct such pursuits. The increasing popularity of the junior high school which bridges the gap between the grade-school group and the mature high-school group contributes to the solution of such dilemmas. For, after all, the child with superior endowment often presents a dilemma.

The fact that 12-year-old *Alma*, whose mental age was 3 years ahead of her chronological age, was flunking all her grade-school work because it was not sufficiently interesting or stimulating to hold her attention, illustrates the folly of holding the bright child back. The discovery that she was really bright was as much of a surprise to her as to her teachers, and almost at once she began to do more difficult work in a more satisfactory manner.

The same three principles apply in dealing with the superior child: (1) The necessity for recognizing the superior ability for what it is, meanwhile taking stock of the physical development and personality traits that go with it; (2) the importance of placing the child properly in school, with reference not only to his mental age but also to his size and his general level of maturity; and (3) the wisdom of guiding the adolescent toward becoming a well-adjusted and happy individual rather than merely an efficient set of brain cells.

### SPECIAL ABILITIES AND DISABILITIES

Certain special abilities and disabilities, talents, and intellectual handicaps or defects occur not uncommonly. Examples of individuals remarkable for such special abilities and disabilities are known to everyone; there are individuals with extraordinary visual memories enabling them to visualize a printed page and thus recall to memory names and dates as if they were reading them; there are individuals with extraordinary auditory memories who can recite a poem or retain the tune of a song after hearing it but once; there are some individuals who earn a livelihood by showing off their ability as lightning calculators; and in contrast to all of these, there are the students who have "a wretched memory", "no ear for a tune", or "no head for figures."

Special abilities or disabilities may be a part of the intellectual equipment of the feeble-minded, the average, or the superior individual. It is, therefore, not sufficient to recognize the special ability or disability without also recognizing the general level of intelligence that goes with it. The father who said, "My son can draw well and could make a good cartoonist, but he has no ideas", showed good insight into the relation between a special ability and general intelligence, and also a good appreciation of his son's equipment.

He realized that his son had superior ability in drawing but that his general level of intelligence was low.

This does not indicate that the special ability should be neglected or even that it should not be cultivated. The danger lies in building the young person's entire life around his one strong point regardless of his possible inability to bring the rest of his life up to this peak. One would not think of trying to make a tennis champion out of a boy merely because he had a good stroke and a good eye for his ball, without considering the condition of his heart and his general physical reaction to exercise; yet the mere fact that he is not up to the strenuous practice and the excitement of a professional tournament need not debar him from enjoying amateur games.

It is even more disastrous, however, to build the young person's life around a disability and to say, for example, that there is no point in continuing his education because he can never learn to spell, or to classify him once and for all as stupid and dull because he has a poor visual memory or difficulty in reading. Reading disabilities, although they often go unrecognized, are relatively common and sometimes cause serious problems. In recent years much experimental work has been done in an effort to discover ways and means of helping individuals to overcome or compensate for such special disabilities. Special instruction, once the disability is recognized, will often help greatly in overcoming it. But even where it is not possible to provide such remedial assistance, it is still possible to prevent young people from looking upon a particular handicap as the stumbling block in the way of happiness regardless of the road pursued.

Naturally the special ability has certain advantages over the disability, for it can often be capitalized with appreciable success. A good memory can be capitalized in dozens of ways and may completely conceal from the general public an otherwise inferior mind; but a poor memory—of what possible advantage can it be save to serve as a convenient excuse for failure?

Although the psychologists and their intelligence tests have contributed to an appreciative understanding of these deviations of the human mind, and although it may be necessary to turn to them for an expert opinion or a final word of advice when in doubt as to the best plan for an individual child, there is no reason why parents and teachers should not be able to recognize some of these things from their own observation and take such steps as seem wise to overcome the handicap.

## THE INDIVIDUAL AS A WHOLE

It is a commonplace of experience to see young men and women with brilliant minds and healthy bodies occupying secondary places in every walk of life, though their training entitles them to first places, simply because their personalities are like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes. (Richards, Esther Loring, M.D.: *Behaviour Aspects of Child Conduct*, p. 217. Macmillan Co., New York, 1932.)

Notwithstanding the fact that we study the physical growth and development of the child, that we investigate with keen interest his varied habits and conduct patterns, we still are confronted with the necessity of measuring success or failure in life in terms of how well all these varied aspects of the total individual are coordinating one with the other. After all is said and done, a good intellect, sound bodily health, and what are commonly called "good habits" all may work out to no useful purpose unless they are so operating as to make a harmonious unity.

How frequently we hear a remark like this: "Why is it that John never really accomplished anything in life? He came from a good family, was well educated, and never had any real sickness. He works hard, has clean habits, and is perfectly straight, yet he has never gone very far in business. He doesn't make friends easily, and he seems to be getting so little out of life. John has never quite fitted into the scheme of things socially, and he realizes it quite as well as his neighbors, but nobody knows why this is so."

John's failure to make the grade in life is not a problem that can be solved by casual observation; it is one of those situations which is very complicated and involved, frequently leading back to childhood. Parental attitudes and early experiences which have resulted in warping his point of view on life or giving him a false evaluation of his own relation to the world are the most common causes for his failure.

The world is full of Johns—individuals who are failing to make life as full as they should either for themselves or for those with whom they come in contact. The twists in personality which account for failure and unhappiness are not introduced into the life of the individual suddenly and unexpectedly; invariably they are the result of a very slow, insidious process, being the effect of the environment over a long period of years. One does not have to wait until the child reaches the adolescent age to determine the evidence of impend-

ing danger. All his habits and personality traits are in the process of development from birth, and it is fortunate indeed that the efficiency of an individual at any given age level can be measured with a fair degree of success.

People are inclined to think of maturity as a definite state to be reached much as if it were the end of a journey. It would be better to think of it as an ever-receding goal toward which we begin to march at birth and go on to the end of life. We can check up at any given point and find out whether or not we are on time, so to speak, or have covered the allotted distance for any given period. In other words, there is a fairly well recognized standard for maturity at 3 years of age just as there is at 13, and the adequacy with which the individual's total personality is progressing can always be measured in terms of his maturity for any given age. The 3-year old who wets the bed, refuses to eat unless fed, and demands that his parents rock him to sleep is immature. The 8-year-old boy who needs constant supervision for his leisure time, who needs help in dressing and undressing, who sets up a howl when his parents go away, leaving him well cared for while they take a short vacation, is immature. The 14-year-old boy who is irresponsible about his school work and chores, who is given to chronic grouches if he cannot have his own way, who must have someone tell him what clothes to wear, who needs to have all his activities planned for him, is also immature. So is the adult immature who cannot stand authority, who is extremely selfish, who meets all difficulties by running away, who uses alcohol as a retreat or illness as an excuse.

The immaturity of the child during the preadolescent years is primarily a matter of concern to his parents, but early in adolescence other people, particularly those of the same age group, begin to impose certain very definite standards upon youth, holding them more rigidly accountable for their conduct during this period. The adolescent himself becomes more and more aware at this time of his own maturity or immaturity. He is inclined to compare himself with others of his own age and social setting and feels inferior if he does not measure up to them.

The standards mentioned for maturity at adolescence are not so well defined as those for the preschool years, for as the child grows up his reactions to life become more and more affected by his past experiences and these experiences are never the same for any two individuals. There are, however, certain types of reaction which are definitely immature and therefore are not acceptable to the group to which he logically belongs.

*Julius*, for example, was described as immature by all his high-school teachers. When they were requested to give specific examples of what they meant by "immature", one teacher pointed out that although Julius was 18 years of age

and a senior in high school, he still proudly wore his Scout uniform to school and still seemed as enthusiastic about junior scouting as the average 12-year old; another mentioned the fact that he did not seem to mix well with boys of his own age, that the latter did not pay any attention to him; another called attention to his class work, which was distinctly below the level expected of a boy of his age; and the principal added a report concerning this boy's lack of emotional control demonstrated in his own office one day when Julius, aged 18, burst into tears and begged him not to tell his mother that he had skipped one of his classes.

This boy's mother gave a very similar picture of his behavior at home. She thought this was all due to lack of ambition and stressed the fact that his younger brother was able to find part-time jobs even when Julius could not, because the younger brother was more ambitious.

The school psychologist attributed Julius' poor adjustment to his mediocre intellectual equipment, concluding that his social behavior could not be expected to be more mature than his mental age.

But Julius' social behavior was actually below even his mental age, and explanation had to be sought still further. It was learned that this boy had been born in a small country town, where he had spent a happy boyhood. When he was about 10 years of age, his parents had been divorced and his mother had moved to a large industrial city with her two sons. Julius had been very fond of his father; and although his mother never discussed the parental separation or the father's remarriage, the boy understood that his father was under a cloud. He was vaguely unhappy about this and about being so far away from his father and from the town and neighborhood in which he had been happy. He could not get used to the city boys and their ways, nor to the city schools. The more leisurely pace of life in the country town was much more to his liking. He happened to find a certain amount of comfortable companionship in a Boy Scout troop; doubtless, too, the Scout leader acted as a substitute for his father. Thus he stayed on even though all of the other boys of his age had dropped out.

And so he was called immature, as indeed he was compared to other 18-year-old city boys, or even compared to his younger brother who was also born in the country, or compared to other boys with his mediocre intellectual equipment. The combination of unfavorable circumstances and small native endowment presented too difficult a situation for him to be able to meet adequately. He might have been considered mature in his country-town environment, in spite of his limited mental ability; he might have been considered mature if he had had higher intellectual ability even if he had moved to the industrial city; and he might have been considered mature if his family life had remained normal and stable in spite of the existence of the other factors. Another boy might have reacted to this situation by becoming very responsible and even over-mature, trying to relieve his mother of some of her burdens and help her to bring up the younger brother. But for Julius this reaction was not possible.

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Another type of immaturity is illustrated by *Ellen*, who was the second oldest in a family of five girls. Ellen was 20 years of age when her mother began to be worried about her apparent immaturity. Her mother thought that the girl had a good mind but was too lazy to use it and that all her interest was centered in herself and her own activities so that she had none to spare for what her mother considered the big issues of life.

Most distressing of all was the daughter's attitude toward her engagement. Ellen was wearing some lad's fraternity pin and considered herself "as good

as engaged", but her mother knew that the acquaintanceship between these two young people had been very brief and that previously Ellen had displayed a similar enthusiasm for another boy. This mother regarded an engagement as a serious relationship and a relationship preceding marriage, and Ellen's attitude of more or less playing with the idea of an engagement naturally seemed immature.

Although girls of the present generation do not marry at as early an age as their mothers did, the casual attitude to which this mother objected is not the only alternative to an early marriage, and she was right in regarding her daughter as immature. It is to be expected that at 20, young people will have sufficient appreciation of what is serious in life no longer to play with personal relationships in a childish way.

What this mother did not seem to realize, however, was that Ellen's immaturity had probably not happened all at once. She could have observed earlier that her daughter was growing up to be a selfish young woman interested only in her own pleasures, with no thought of consequences, no consideration for other people, and no care for the future. The mother seemed to take her own life seriously. Why should her daughter have such a superficial outlook on life? Probably because this mother had taken a keen delight in being able to provide for her daughters many of the luxuries which she herself had not enjoyed, surrounding them with comforts, relieving them of all burdens and obligations, and making life just as pleasant and easy as possible for them. She had helped these girls to go through adolescence with little to do but have a good time, and then she wondered why at 20 Ellen seemed immature.

People become mature by assuming obligations and responsibilities and by having to do things for themselves and others. If a mother continues to dress her little boy until he is 8 years of age, the boy will be considered immature for being unable to dress himself, even though his mother is responsible for this immaturity. So the parents who indulge their adolescents, letting them think of life as their happy playground, are themselves responsible for the immaturity which may manifest itself as a superficial outlook on life.

Often enough the growing boy and girl are ready for more responsibility and independence than their parents are willing to give them. They resent being "babied" and begin to struggle for more freedom. They may feel, for instance, that they are old enough to know when to go to bed without being told, or that they should not have to ask permission every time they wish to go out of the house, or that it is humiliating to ask separately for each cent of spending money.

*Earl* was a lusty 14-year old whose parents were completely at a loss to know what to do with him. He came and went when he chose and refused to answer any of their questions as to what he had been doing. He was extremely sensitive to criticism and easily lost his temper when reproved. His parents considered him selfish, thoughtless, and reckless, and were concerned most of all with his utter disregard for authority.

This boy's father was a militaristic individual who enjoyed giving orders and expected them to be obeyed. He could not think of life except in terms of laws and rules and regulations. When the members of his family did

anything that displeased him, he would point out that the laws of the State—or the church—gave him the right to insist on such and such behavior and imposed on the rest of the family the duty of obeying. Whenever there were not enough laws to meet the situation, he made some rules and regulations of his own and expected them to be honored as rigidly as if they had been imposed by the State.

Now, rules and regulations in a household are vitally essential if family life is to be an orderly, harmonious, and educational experience. It is an excellent thing, for example, to have a regulation that the preschool child have supper alone at 5 o'clock and be put to bed at 6, before the rest of the family sit down to their evening meal. But few parents would insist that this regulation be enforced after the child reaches the age of 7, 8, or 9. Yet Earl's father was doing this very thing when he insisted that his 14-year-old boy observe all the rules and regulations he had imposed upon him in early childhood.

It is not to be assumed that at 14 Earl should have been allowed every liberty. But at 14 he should be expected to exercise a certain amount of independent judgment regarding his activities. When a boy is 14 it should no longer be necessary to tell him to wash his hands for supper nor to check up on how he spent every minute of the day or every cent of his money. His early training should insure his using common sense in these matters, and an occasional friendly expression of interest will be far more effective than a daily cross-examination in helping him to maintain as satisfactory a standard of conduct when he is "on his own" as when he was completely under parental control.

It was suggested to Earl and his parents that the latter drop some of their rules and regulations about matters of minor importance and that the former really assume some responsibility for manly conduct and prove himself deserving of the independence he so much craved. After several months of ups and downs, family life in this home began to take on a brighter and more harmonious air. Earl was obviously a much happier boy, and at the same time his parents were much better pleased with his conduct.

One of the specific ways in which the parent can help the adolescent to become independent is in connection with the spending of money. The problem of training in the use and value of money is not one which belongs to the adolescent years. The child who reaches this period of his social development without some very definite and well-thought-out ideas about the earning, saving, and giving of money and, in a more general way, the budgeting of his income regardless of the source from which it may be derived, has missed something very important that has much to contribute to the efficiency with which he will meet many of the practical problems of living later on.

Although this training should be started long before the child reaches the adolescent period, it may not be out of place to state that every child should be given an allowance, small though it may be, just as soon as he is old enough to realize the varied purposes which money serves—that is, as soon as he is called upon to use it for giving, buying, or saving. When he reaches that stage of mental and physical maturity at which he has something definite to contribute in

the way of labor that has money value, he should be given the opportunity of finding out for himself just how much time and effort has to be spent in order that he may receive a well-earned nickel or dime. The wise parent will teach the child to distinguish between money given to him in order that he may meet his daily obligations and learn how to manage his finances, and money that represents payment for service of real value.

There is a marked difference between compensation for a job well done and a bribe that is given to induce the child to perform some task which he should have performed because it was the right thing to do. Notwithstanding the fact that the training in the use of money begins early in the life of the child, it is one of those problems which is rarely settled satisfactorily for all time. It keeps bobbing up, demanding decisions in the light of new experiences, new demands, new opportunities, and new situations. It is quite as important to know when to spend and how to spend wisely as it is how to save. Many people never learn how to give without reluctance, while others give lavishly but without judgment, frequently doing more harm than good. Children should learn at an early age that there is pleasure in work and that they are entitled to the rewards of their efforts. Rewards in the form of money earned by honest toil, especially when they entail the giving up of playtime or a holiday, or acquired through some other sacrifice will be less likely to be squandered foolishly than will be the unexpected gift or even the taken-for-granted allowance.

Most boys and girls in their teens do not enjoy asking their parents for every dime to be spent on carfare, every quarter for lunch, and every half dollar for a hair cut. If they are working on a part-time job, they may be earning enough to take care of these small needs, but whether the money comes from their own earnings or from their parents' pocket, they should undoubtedly have something definite in the way of an allowance and they should be given a certain latitude in spending it.

Sometimes the resentment of authority and the rebelliousness against close supervision is manifested as a personal dislike and even hatred of the child for his parent.

*Betsy*, for example, was so angry and upset when her mother sent her to camp against her will that she refused to say good-bye to her, and all her letters home contained but three words for her mother; namely, "I hate you." Even at 12½ years the girl was too mature to be sent off to camp without having some choice in the matter—particularly when she so obviously disliked the idea. Her resentment against being disposed of in this peremptory fashion found a natural expression in a personal hatred. It was not a new resentment and did not spring up overnight; it had been in the making for a long time and had previously expressed itself in Betsy's refusal to confide in her mother. Her attitude seemed to be, "You can force me to do



things I don't want to do and prevent my doing things I want to do, but you can't make me tell you anything unless I want to and you can't know my own thoughts." She took an almost fierce delight in being secretive and in thwarting all her mother's efforts to come close to her.

During adolescence the individual becomes more keenly aware of his thoughts as personal possessions. Not only can he keep them to himself, but he can think in opposition to his parents. Fiction and biography both contain innumerable descriptions of adolescents who suddenly find that there are nice people whose views on questions of religion, economics, politics, education, science, personal relationships, and conduct are diametrically opposed to those entertained by their parents. Often enough the adolescent finds that these people are not so bad nor so stupid as he has been led to believe. Perhaps, on the contrary, their outlook on life seems more intelligent and more agreeable than that of the parents.

This discovery and the adolescent's consequent refusal to adhere any longer to the point of view of his parents very often resolves itself into as much of a struggle as the adolescent's refusal to return home at the hour set, or to obey some other parental command. Frequently the struggle resolves itself into some individual issue: The adolescent insists on going to college despite his father's conviction that higher education unfits young people for meeting the practical demands of life; or he brings home boys and girls whose race, religion, nationality, or economic or social status makes them unacceptable to his parents.

Sometimes there is no practical issue involved, and yet the harmony of family life is disrupted by the bitterness of two opposing systems of thought. Parents and child may wage an intellectual war, for instance, on the subject of free love or communism, which the adolescent is utilizing as a means of expressing some thoughts independent of his parents. He may not have the slightest intention of becoming a communist; but by arguing in favor of communism, he is expressing rebellion and resentment toward parental authority. He may not have the slightest desire to participate in free-love relationships, but he is trying to prove to himself as well as to his parents that he is capable of thinking his own thoughts and arriving at his own conclusions.

The desire for personal independence and more control over one's own activities or thoughts is so normal an aspect of adolescence that the boy or girl who clings to his parents and fears to take any step that might possibly lead him further away from the security and protection of childhood is considered overdependent or immature.

Thus, *Judith*, who at 14 was unable to adjust herself to boarding-school life because of homesickness, might well be considered abnormally dependent.

Judith got on well with girls in school, made friends easily, and seemed to be well liked; but she was so used to the constant solicitude with which her mother had surrounded her and so dependent upon her mother's good-night kiss, her mother's suggestions as to what to wear, her mother's thoughtfulness about her meals, her mother's interest in all her little physical complaints, and her mother's endearments that she felt utterly lost without her. Even the daily letters which overflowed with sentimentality were not enough to give her the sense of closeness to her mother that she needed. She became so weepy and hysterical that she finally had to be sent home.

Judith's mother had very definitely contributed to her daughter's need and dependence upon her and was obviously preventing her from growing up into a mature and independent young woman. Often a mother glories in such a relationship with her children, finding pleasure in the fact that they cannot get along without her. Such a mother is too selfish to realize that she is crippling her child emotionally. She forgets that in the natural course of events her child is likely to outlive her and if he has become completely dependent upon her, he will be lost without her. She fails to see that she is preventing the child from finding his own place in the world of other people.

*Raymond's* first reaction to boarding school was much like Judith's and for a very similar reason. Instead of crying and becoming hysterical, however, he ran away; and as soon as he was returned, he ran away again. He made every effort to get back to his mother, as she had been the one who had protected him all his life against every hardship and sheltered him from everything that was disagreeable. His father had always been stern and severe with him and had considered him a weakling and a coward, but his mother's kind and gentle protectiveness had been ample consolation for him. At boarding school there were plenty of people who seemed stern and forbidding and unsympathetic like his father, but there was no one gentle and protective like his mother. Consequently his one desire was to get back to her, to which end he continually ran away. In trying to shield this boy from his father, the mother had merely succeeded in making him completely dependent upon herself.

It is often necessary for a mother to act as a mediator between the father and the child, particularly when the father is much older than the children, or when he has been so much engrossed in his business that he fails to appreciate the child's point of view, or when he is exceptionally quick-tempered or exacting. But in such a case the mother can accomplish far more both for the father and for the child by endeavoring to give the father a better understanding of the child's psychology and by showing an understanding of the father's attitude than by assuming a frankly protective attitude toward the child. Occasionally this situation arises with the father acting as mediator between the mother and the child; but this is less common, as usually the mother's daily contact with her children makes for a more patient and tolerant understanding of them.

## SOME EDUCATIONAL PITFALLS

All of the child goes to school—not merely his intellect. His mind is in the custody of his body, and his body affects his mind. His emotions determine his application and exertions, and his interests influence his emotions. (Wile, Ira S., M.D.: "Good" Education and "Bad" Children. *Mental Hygiene*, vol. 9, no. 1 (January 1925), pp. 105-112.)

As might be expected, of all the adolescent problems those concerning educational progress are the most common. Practically every child, regardless of his mental or physical development and his social or economic status, is confronted with the task of acquiring knowledge of the world in which he lives. As he advances in years competition becomes more keen, and failures in academic work become more common.

These failures are due only to a very limited degree to actual intellectual inferiority. But, as has been pointed out, a child with an average mind—an intelligence quotient ranging from 95 to 105—may do very well in the lower grades but may not be able to survive the keen competition with children of superior intelligence as he advances to the higher grades and to high school. About one half of all the children entering public schools graduate from grammar school; but less than one third get through high school, and only 1 out of 10 graduates from college.

Parents who fail to appreciate the increased intellectual demands that are made on children as they advance up this intellectual ladder may be quite unjust in their criticisms of those who fail. Many a parent complains that Johnny could do the work in high school if he only tried; and that he never had any trouble in grammar school, where he worked hard and was interested. This may all be true, but many of these children are carrying intellectual loads which are beyond their ability and interest, and they just naturally lag behind and slacken in their efforts. It must be remembered that on the physical side some have only a 6-hour capacity for standardized work, while others can carry on indefinitely for 8 or 10 or 12 hours unimpaired by fatigue.

It is perhaps not difficult to understand why parents who are but little concerned about the emotional life of the child, perhaps being quite oblivious to such personality traits as shyness, jealousy, feelings of inferiority, and the like, and those who are rather casual about the physical growth and development, take this problem of

school failure so seriously. The parents seem to feel that such failure indicates actual inferiority, and, either consciously or unconsciously, they blame themselves. Teachers are prone to view failure as a reflection upon their ability to teach, and they, too, frequently join with the parents in pushing and prodding and generally harassing this unfortunate group of children.

It is therefore important to keep in mind that there is a fairly large number of boys and girls well developed physically, capable of fitting into the varied social situations in life in a perfectly adequate way, who require a special type of instruction to meet their particular needs. In attempting to help them acquire knowledge, one should think in terms of breadth, rather than height; that is, the boy or girl who reaches a mental age of 13 or 14 is intellectually capable of acquiring a more useful and practical grasp of those essentials pertaining to the social, economic, and industrial aspects of the world in which he lives than many students have at the termination of a college course. It all depends upon the wisdom with which these individuals are guided and directed.

There is another group of adolescents who run into scholastic difficulties, not on account of mediocre or relatively poor intellectual equipment, but rather on account of poor preparation. Many situations encountered by the child during the school year contribute to this particular difficulty. In some of the larger cities many children enter school before they are mentally ready to do first-grade work. Such children would do well to repeat the first grade; but in the natural course of events, there is a new line of children waiting and as the number of places in the first grade is limited, they must move on. Consequently, each year children are pushed ahead from grade to grade unfitted by their previous experience to meet the task at hand. These children cannot be held back in any large numbers because actual space in the schoolroom is not available. But their inadequate preparation in early years, unless recognized and corrected, will obviously lead to serious difficulties during the adolescent period.

That group of children who are prevented from attending school regularly on account of illness or perhaps some chronic physical handicap must also be considered. They, too, are pushed along—sometimes at the instigation of an ambitious parent, sometimes because of misdirected sympathy on the part of a teacher, and then again to make a place for someone else.

There are also a certain number of students whose continuity in school work is interrupted, sometimes unavoidably, by definite changes that have to be made in their parents' place of abode. It is no small portion of the population that must seek employment

wherever it is available. This problem arises in various social and economic levels and may affect the minister or the teacher or the mill worker. It can be easily seen that these periodic interruptions in school work are definite factors contributing to failure.

*Bertha's* greatest handicap in doing successful school work was her constant change of schools. Her father was an Army officer whose particular activities required frequent changes, and each change for him meant a different school for the girl. Not only was the continuity of her school work interrupted, but the various methods in use in the different schools proved very confusing to her. One year might be spent in a rather small, strictly supervised private school and the next year in a large public school where the students were pretty much "on their own." It was not surprising that under such conditions, which were prolonged over a period of years, this girl not only encountered difficulties due to the varied content of her work but also failed to acquire any ability in dispensing her time wisely or concentrating well during the time she actually devoted to her work.

Then there are those parents who build their lives entirely around their own pleasures with an utter disregard for the welfare of the child, so that children are taken out of school because parents want to travel, move to another neighborhood, pay a prolonged visit to some relative, or follow some other whim. An example of this may be seen in the case of *Oliver*.

*Oliver's* failure in school was due entirely to the fact that his parents wandered about so steadily in search of pleasure and recreation that they denied him the opportunity of attending school for more than short periods at a time. He was placed here and there for a term as it suited the family's convenience. He never learned to study, to make friends, nor to acquire that sense of security which comes from being a part of a social group. In spite of a perfectly good intellectual equipment, he was totally inadequate to meet the scholastic demands even on a level 2 or 3 years below his actual age.

Inability to concentrate is often given as a cause of failure to acquire satisfactory passing marks. The ability to concentrate is a gradual acquisition in the life of the child, and parents should make an effort to see that they do not themselves interfere with this development by creating a program that is altogether too active for him. Extracurricular activities are of real educational value in giving the young boy or girl greater opportunity for finding out what life has to offer him and what he can contribute, but such activities may be overdone. It may be that special interests for which the child shows some talent are permitted to assume an importance which they do not deserve. Too much parental interest can be demonstrated in building radios and airplanes, in sketching, in music and dancing lessons, and so forth, to the discouragement of any concentrated effort on the school work to be done.

Athletics, dramatics, and even the otherwise harmless associations with those of the opposite sex, may all become so diverting that the

real purpose of school attendance is entirely overlooked. There are those individuals who seem to be capable of absorbing all these varied interests and still maintaining a satisfactory average in their school work. Most students, however, need considerable guidance lest they spread their interests and energies so thin that none of their activities receives adequate attention.

Roger is a good example of a fine type of boy, well-endowed intellectually but so proficient in his athletic abilities that he just played himself out of high school, his teachers meanwhile looking on. There is, of course, but little excuse for the head of the school to allow any boy with a perfectly good intellectual equipment to spend so much of his time on extracurricular activities that there is none left for study.

Occasionally one finds failure in academic work to be due to lack of interest in the subject matter. This being true, the adolescent will often seek for his intellectual satisfactions in outside reading or other diversions which may in themselves be educational but which do not contribute to his progress through the school. This may mean that a change in the curriculum is advisable; or, if the student has a definite objective, such as college entrance, it will necessitate his grasping the fact that certain subjects which he is required to learn in school must be studied because they are a means to an end, even though they hold no interest for him as an end in themselves. Students of the adolescent age should begin to realize that in adult life one can spend but a limited amount of time doing exactly the things one would like to do. There are many obligations and responsibilities put on all of us which we assume and carry out as part of the day's task.

On account of the lack of interest in the course of study, a student may develop the idea that the work is too hard, that it is over his head, and that, regardless of how much he might study, he would inevitably fail. Here one may do much to overcome this feeling of inferiority by arranging for him to have a psychological examination. It is reassuring to the student to know that he has a good set of mental tools with which to work, that the subject matter which they are tackling is well within his grasp, and that failure is due not to inferior intellectual equipment but to the way he happens to be using his equipment.

Often emotional situations present obstacles to the child's ability to measure up to his group in school. Disturbed emotional attitudes toward life are probably far more common as a cause for failure than all other causes put together; and, although the situation may appear relatively unimportant in the beginning, the conflict over

the failure itself complicates the emotional attitude toward the situation. Thus young people, who have never had an opportunity to grow up and actually become independent, may meet fairly well the situations to which they have been trained as a matter of routine but will find themselves totally at sea when it comes to utilizing their time and ability without strict supervision. This, again, is a matter of training.

Parents, in their eagerness to contribute to the happiness of their children and to protect them from even the minor hardships of life, are frequently inclined to believe that their own experiences, their own unhappiness and failures, can be utilized to save the child the pangs of humiliation that are brought about by failure and disappointment. They are always modifying the ordinary, everyday situations so that their children can meet them without even for the moment endangering their happiness. In other words, these parents never allow the child to meet life and all its complex problems, as it actually exists. They fail to appreciate that experience is the most trustworthy weapon and that knowledge is the best armor for those who are about to step out of the home and battle with the world at large.

A 14-year-old girl, *Cecilia*, was causing both her school principal and her parents considerable concern, as they felt she was not doing work in keeping with her intellectual equipment. There was also evidence that she was emotionally unstable. At times she was given to outbursts of temper, was inclined to be impertinent to those in authority, and did not assume responsibility well. It did not take long to determine the basis for this girl's immature conduct. She was extremely dependent upon her mother, and the demands which she made upon her for things which she was perfectly capable of doing for herself were astounding. An evidence of this immaturity was her insistence on being allowed to sleep with her mother. This close, unhealthy relationship built around mother and daughter was all-absorbing. It narrowed her interests and practically eliminated friendships with other girls. Even when there were girls of her own age available, Cecilia was likely to ignore them and seek the companionship of grown-ups.

This immaturity and unpreparedness for life, although in evidence long before adolescence, had been either overlooked or taken for granted by her parents. It was only when Cecilia was confronted with some of the more complicated social situations which naturally evolve in adolescence—when some social contact with those of her own age became inevitable through school activities—that her own discontent with her conduct led to general dissatisfaction and unhappiness reflecting itself in her school work as well as in her social behavior.

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*Dora* was another girl whose parents had dominated her life, not by solicitude in this case but by rigid rules and regulations. She was of college age and well endowed intellectually but had also been denied the divine privilege of expressing her own personality. At 18 she was without ideas of her own and

without initiative. When called upon to assume obligations outside her home, she was overwhelmed because of her inability to make decisions even about the most trivial things. Notwithstanding the fact that she had a superior intellectual equipment, she was failing where those less fortunately endowed intellectually, but better trained, were succeeding.

Overambitious parents must also be mentioned as a factor in creating emotional situations leading to school failures. In their desire to have children succeed and excel in their school work, they are likely to place too high a premium on marks and stress scholastic attainment to the exclusion of everything else. To desire success for one's children is laudable, but to demand scholastic honors of the child for the sake of gratifying personal pride is downright selfish.

The student himself may set his standard so high and become so concerned in competing for high marks that he misses much of the pleasure and satisfaction of school life. Friendships, athletics, dramatics, and the general welfare of the school are sometimes sacrificed in this keen competition; and if he fails to attain success in this scholastic striving, all is lost. This is an attitude that should not be encouraged either by teachers or by parents. The following case is an excellent example of how an ambitious father with very dominant ideas created an emotional situation that worked out to the disadvantage of a 16-year-old boy who was vigorous physically and keen mentally and had a personality that should have carried him a long way toward success.

*Andrew* had lost his mother very early in life and had been brought up by a kindly, affectionate relative, who undoubtedly was a bit too much concerned about his health, manners, and personal appearance. In spite of this, however, he developed in a most satisfactory way. His school work was a bit better than the average, he excelled in athletics, enjoyed reading good books, and developed as a sort of hobby his flair for writing a bit of poetry.

Andrew's father was very enthusiastic about his son's athletic abilities and spurred him on to greater activity in this particular field. With reference to his literary interests, however, he was quite intolerant and left no stone unturned to humiliate this boy about what he called his "sissified" indulgence. He finally had him transferred to a school where greater emphasis was put on athletic ability; but instead of being stimulated to greater effort in baseball and football, Andrew became more and more absorbed in his reading and poetry.

As might have been expected, his behavior antagonized the father and soon caused a real gulf between the two. The boy became argumentative and later resentful and defiant toward what he felt was unjust domination on the part of his father. He also complained that the latter no longer understood him. The emotional state that was created in the boy by this antagonism toward his father, however, dulled his enthusiasm for his school work and his athletic activities, and even for his hobbies, and he had such a severe slump that he was on the verge of flunking out of school. It was necessary to have frequent interviews with both the father and the son over a period of several weeks



before the former began to appreciate his son's needs, leaving him free to build his life around his own personality rather than around his father's ambition.

These emotional conflicts of youth find their origin in many obscure experiences and situations to which the adolescent is subjected, and they can be understood only when one takes time to know intimately the personality make-up of the youth and the varied environmental situations which he has to combat. One must take into consideration the social, economic, and cultural conditions in which he has been reared; the moral codes, religious creeds, racial background of his family, and the peculiarities and eccentricities of the members of his family; what his parents demand of their children in the way of obligations and responsibilities, and what they permit them in the way of privileges. All these are of importance.

One must keep in mind that many of the individuals who fail to make a place for themselves in either school or college meet the more concrete and practical situations of life successfully. Many individuals who are not what is termed "intellectual" are very intelligent; and life in its everyday contacts is met successfully only with intelligence. The emotional conflicts which have been considered may lead to behavior that brings the individual into conflict not only with the family and society at large but with himself. These behavior problems are invariably the result of an environmental situation due to a multiplicity of conditions and circumstances; and the success of parents and teachers in handling these problems depends upon their ability to understand how these complex situations create emotional attitudes which affect the conduct of the adolescent.

## THE QUESTION OF WORK

The normal adolescent must be expected to cause much trouble for himself and others unless definite provision be made for what in primitive life he always had—some control of his own living. (Hollingworth, Leta S.: *The Psychology of the Adolescent*, pp. 93-94. D. Appleton & Co., New York, 1928.)

It is important to learn to work and to derive all the possible benefits from experience with employment. A valuable opportunity is thus provided for finding one's self in relation to the rest of the working world, for becoming more independent, for learning more about people and social conditions, for discovering one's own vocational aptitudes and inclinations, and for finding a valid outlet for surplus energies and emotions.

The part that work occupies in the life of the average adolescent varies widely. Each year thousands of boys and girls leave school at 14 or 15 to enter regular, gainful employment, while others look forward to many more years of education and training for future usefulness.<sup>1</sup> In rural districts the work of many young people ranges all the way from doing chores on the family farm outside of school hours or during vacations to full-time employment in agriculture on a commercial basis. In the cities the work of adolescents may be confined to cooperation in a few simple household duties, or it may involve any of the full-time or part-time jobs open to young people in industry and commerce.

No matter how much emphasis is placed on the value of work in the process of character training or how much stress is laid on the undesirability of heavy labor or long-sustained work for the rapidly growing boy or girl, the fact remains that economic necessity compels some adolescents to work while economic independence makes gainful employment entirely unnecessary for others. This does not mean that all adolescents who leave school at an early age to go to work do so because of extreme economic need. The attitude of parents also is a determining factor in many cases. The number of young people employed fluctuates with business conditions and is highest in times of prosperity when there would seem to be less need for them to contribute to the family support. Some parents encourage their children to find jobs as soon as they reach the legal

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<sup>1</sup> The minimum-age provisions set up under the National Industrial Recovery Act, through the President's reemployment agreement, substitute agreements, and codes of fair competition so far adopted establish 16 as a minimum age for employment of minors in industry and business (at least during school hours), with a higher age limit for certain hazardous occupations. Unless extended, this will be temporary, as the legislation was enacted for a 2-year period.

school-leaving age, because they are eager for the additional income which the child's earnings can provide, even though they may not really need it. In other cases the child himself may insist on leaving school to go to work either because he is dissatisfied with school or because his parents have failed to develop in him the proper understanding of what education really is and are unable to cope with his impatient desire for immediate independence.

Nevertheless, in many instances, economic necessity is an important factor in determining whether or not the individual boy or girl seeks a job. A contribution of a few dollars a week may be so essential to the income of one family that a growing girl is obliged to spend all her after-school and Saturday hours working in a store when she really needs rest, fresh air, sunshine, and exercise to supply the physical resistance and nervous energy she will need later in life. On the other hand, a family which has never known financial need may discourage a perfectly healthy and energetic boy from taking a job that would provide an outlet for his energy and striving for independence and would give him valuable training and experience. In the girl's case the loss of earnings might make it impossible for her to buy the necessary clothes and books and to provide the car fare to enable her to attend high school. In the boy's case, accepting an after-school job as mail boy in an office or shelf boy in a library might mean depriving some boy in real financial need of an opportunity to earn money. To advise this girl to give up her job without making some plan for a scholarship or attempting to arrange a part-time school program for her would be as unreasonable as to advise that the boy seek gainful employment when perhaps a volunteer job or some other outlet would suit his needs better. Obviously each case must be decided for itself.

It is for the purpose of deciding such questions as these that many schools and colleges have provided vocational counselors and advisers or have made available the services of expert visiting teachers and vocational-guidance specialists or have established personnel offices. For the answers to such questions may well affect the degree of success with which the individual boy and girl make their future adjustments. The majority of adolescents, however, do not have the benefit of expert services to aid in the adjustment of their problems; but even if such assistance were more generally available, it would still be necessary for parents and other adults in close contact with these young people to make every effort to understand all the factors that are being considered. In any case it is of the utmost importance that parents give earnest thought to the kind of work which their children undertake. Obviously, all types of work are not equally suitable, and some are distinctly harmful. A newspaper

route may provide a certain amount of business training and develop habits of regularity, while a job as newsboy selling papers on a crowded street or late at night cannot be recommended. Taking subscriptions for reputable magazines may be a relatively pleasant way of earning a few extra dollars, even though it may not provide much training; but when selling on commission involves teaching boys and girls and even very young children to tell pathetic stories in order to dispose of their wares, it is an occupation in which no right-minded parent would want to see children engaged.

Aside entirely from the question of economic pressure, a certain amount of work is desirable in the adolescent's program. Not only does work of the right type and right amount encourage habits of industry and develop responsibility, but it gives the individual a sense of his place in the scheme of things. Father works to supply the income which supports the family. Mother works to make a home for father and the children. It is no more than fair to let children share in this scheme and feel themselves active participants in the producing as well as the consuming aspects of family life. If children have been accustomed from an early age to assume responsibility for a few simple but definite household tasks, in keeping with their years and skill, they will be better able and more willing to undertake more difficult and useful work later on.

There is much talk about the value of work in character training, and yet the fact is often overlooked that the simplest household tasks offer excellent opportunities for just such training. If Don understands that it is his job and his alone to clean the family automobile, that he has assumed the responsibility of cleaning it well and is under obligation to finish his job on time, if his family expresses pleasure in the result and satisfaction in being able to depend upon him, he will take pride in his task and consider it worth doing well. But this will not be true if father stands on the back porch watching every step with a critical eye or exclaiming in impatience over the length of time it takes the boy.

If Ruth realizes that everything from planning to serving the meal is her responsibility, that she is relieving mother of a real share of her own household obligations, and that her efforts are appreciated by her family, she, too, will take pride, satisfaction, and pleasure in performing this task as well as possible. Children may have to be trained to do a special job; but once they are trained, they should be put "on their own." Much of our satisfaction in work comes from the feeling that it has been our task to do and we have done it to the best of our ability. If there are certain duties for which a child seems temperamentally unsuited—if, for instance, a boy's phlegmatic ways make an endless performance of mowing the lawn—family peace and comfort may necessitate transferring him to

some other activity, and yet training in persistent application to the task in hand may be the very best thing for such an adolescent.

There is also much in the old Tom Sawyer stunt of having such a good time painting the fence that everyone begs for a chance to help. Parents who themselves make drudgery of their work cannot expect their children to feel inspired to help them.

The examples mentioned should not suggest that household activities need be limited to the girls. Ned's mother says that she would be quite unable to keep up with her work and still have time for a little recreation were it not that her two oldest boys—12 and 9 years of age—make their beds, clean their own rooms, and dry dishes for her. This training will prove equally helpful to the boys, not only because they will have acquired a certain proficiency in a few household duties, but also because they will have learned to assume responsibility for even minor obligations in everyday life and to share family burdens.

If work at home has value in giving young people a sense of sharing in the productive aspects of family life, work outside the home gives them a clearer conception of the employer-employee relationship. At home, if Donald wants to go to the ball game, probably his chores can be postponed or done by some other member of the family. If Ruth is going to a party, her mother may excuse her from washing the dishes after the evening meal. Or, if parents insist that the work be done as usual, Donald and Ruth may say that mother and dad are "mean" and "hard" and that they even deprive their own children of a good time. Outside the home Donald and Ruth realize that the newspapers must be delivered promptly regardless of ball games and the library must have its attendant regardless of parties. They may feel aggrieved that this is so, but they learn to expect little mercy from the powers that be in the newspaper business or the public library, and console themselves with the philosophical reflection that "life is like that."

At home, when father and mother request that things be done in a certain way—for example, that the paint brushes be left in turpentine after being used, or that the kitchen towels be rinsed out after each meal—Donald and Ruth may feel that their parents are fussy and set in their ways. They may become irritable, sulky, or resentful when reminded to do things; and if their parents also feel annoyed and irritated at constantly having to point out these oversights, the home atmosphere becomes somewhat unpleasant, and the bonds of sympathy between parents and children are heavily taxed. Outside the home Donald may consider Mr. Cash-and-Carry an old grouch for insisting that groceries must be displayed in his own particular way, and Ruth may wish that her customers could be obliged to return to the racks the dresses they have tried on but not

purchased; but they are likely to accept their trials as the inevitable hardships of work instead of regarding them as personal afflictions.

If work at home has the advantage of providing the adolescent with an opportunity for sharing the business of maintaining family life, work outside the home should give him an opportunity for feeling himself a unit in the larger working world. This is important, for it is during adolescence that the individual is likely to feel most uncertain as to where he really fits in. He needs the security of family life, and yet he wants to escape from it; he needs to feel that he has a place of his own in the world, and at the same time he wants to feel free to explore all kinds of other places. Having a job—an after-school or a Saturday job or a summer-vacation job—provides him with at least a slight degree of the feeling of confidence and security, the assurance of having at least some place he can fill which he so much needs, and yet, at the same time, it provides him with an opportunity for exploring life outside the home.

It is in work outside the home that a young person begins to see his own identity emerge. He is no longer a mere member of a family; in fact his employer and fellow employees may not know a thing about his family. He stands and falls by his own ability and by his own accomplishments. He is paid quite impersonally, on a purely commercial basis. He begins to enjoy the relative economic independence which his earnings may give him, and with this comes a gratifying sense of independence in general. Through his work he begins to gain a new understanding of human nature and to learn to know people as congenial or cantankerous to work for. The principles of honesty and generosity which his parents or his Sunday-school teacher may have taught him take on a new meaning when he sees them practiced in his own contacts and experience with people.

Clearly, the choice of a job for the adolescent, even a temporary, part-time job, should not be left to chance if the boy or the girl is to be benefited by the experience as a wage earner. Such jobs should also be considered as providing material for vocational guidance. Employment as office boy in a lawyer's office may settle once and for all John's question as to whether or not he really wants to study law. Saturdays spent doing odd jobs around father's place of business may help to determine for both father and son whether or not this boy is a good candidate for a future junior partnership. Two hours a day spent in caring for Mrs. Jones' preschool children may convince Sarah that she has neither the patience nor the imagination to enjoy kindergarten work. Work in a bookstore may reveal to another girl that her real interest is not in the books but in the people who read them and that she probably wants to get into some kind of social work.

Work during adolescence under proper conditions is a means of keeping young boys and girls wholesomely occupied, helping them to use up some of the abundant energy that is constantly seeking an outlet, and teaching them that work itself is an excellent antidote for all kinds of dissatisfactions, sorrows, and tribulations.

It must always be kept in mind, however, that boys and girls in their teens are still growing and that the growing process uses up some of their reserve energy. The human machine is not always adjusted to its maximum efficiency during adolescence, and it may sometimes be wiser to keep a growing boy or girl off the job entirely for a summer or discourage his doing more than his required school work for a year if he is not up to par. Parents often fail to understand the problems of their children. Clinton's father speaks sarcastically about his big strapping 15-year old who lounges around the house, too lazy to do anything and too awkward, when he does try to do anything, to do it well. Stanley's mother is somewhat more sympathetic and also more observant when she remarks, "You can tell that Stanley is growing; he lolls about and seems not to have strength enough to move a muscle. Then all of a sudden he will have a spurt of energy that will send him off to play tennis for 3 hours at a stretch in the glaring sun, and nothing can stop him."

This lack of capacity for long-sustained physical effort is one of the real arguments against the employment of immature boys and girls in jobs in which such effort is required of them. The wise parent will not want to seek character development for his children at the expense of their physical welfare. To combine school life and some daily job requires planning if the child's time for home study, play, and exercise is not to be lost or unduly curtailed and if he is not to lose needed hours of sleep, thus jeopardizing success in school or health. A daily job should not be too taxing nor continue too many hours. Saturday jobs, in many cases, would be better.

It is important to learn to work, but it is equally important for youth to learn to play and to derive all the benefits possible from experiences with the wise use of leisure. Indeed, in the present stage of our social progress, in this machine age, training for leisure has assumed new importance. Those who grow up unable to use leisure without breaking the law, unable to seek pleasure in any but forbidden pastimes, unable to find enjoyment without expending large sums of money, or, perhaps, unable to play under any circumstances, present just as much of a social problem as those who never learn to work.

## LEARNING TO USE LEISURE

This stupid experiment of organizing work and failing to organize play has, of course, brought about a fine revenge. The love of pleasure will not be denied, and when it has turned into all sorts of malignant and vicious appetites, then we, the middle-aged, grow quite distracted and resort to all kinds of restrictive measures. (Addams, Jane: *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets*, p. 6. Macmillan Co., New York, 1909.)

### PRESENT COMPLAINTS

The idea that "nowadays" young people do not know how to make intelligent use of their leisure time is constantly dinned into our ears. Anxious parents, harassed school principals, earnest college deans, zealous preachers, eager recreation leaders, each in his own particular way tries to exhort, persuade, adjure, encourage, or shame adolescents into spending their leisure hours more properly and profitably. Occasionally the quiet voice of some judicious man or woman may be heard to say that young people are as fine today as they ever were; that the spirit of youth, which is cherished and envied, has always sought expression in play; and that those who object to the way the young people play had better look to the opportunities that are provided before they criticize the use they make of their opportunities.

Occasionally some man or woman who has spent a lifetime working with boys and girls, watching them at work and in their recreation, and helping them through their troubles, will point out the courage, generosity, seriousness, unselfishness, and readiness to take responsibility that lie beneath the surface of the painted lips and cigarette smoke about which other adults are busy complaining. But such men and women are rare, and their words offer little comfort to the adults who are more concerned with what Mary and John actually do than with the potential courage, unselfishness, seriousness, and generosity that may exist beneath the surface.

What are some of the complaints that are made against the modern adolescent's use of leisure time?

First there are the complaints about leisure time spent at home: Tom is always on the go \* \* \*. Grace comes home just long enough to change her clothes and go out again \* \* \*. When they do stay home they don't know what to do with themselves, and they hang around until one almost wishes they would go out



again \* \* \*. They always tune in for the loud, snappy music without the slightest regard for the tastes of the rest of the family, and they appropriate dad's favorite chair and make a mess of the evening paper \* \* \*. When they bring in their friends, mother and dad can stay in the kitchen \* \* \*.

Now let us see some of the complaints about spending leisure time away from home: When John goes out, the family car goes with him and mother and dad may either walk or stay at home \* \* \*. Jane must see every motion picture and some of them more than once \* \* \*. There's no use trying to suggest the time for coming home; both boys and girls are always late, and they always have some alibi—there was a flat tire, or the party lasted until 2, or someone had to be driven to the other end of town, or nobody realized how late it was getting to be \* \* \*. Ruth has been forbidden to go to —— [a night club], but the rest of the crowd were going and, of course, she couldn't come home alone \* \* \*. We've talked again and again with the children about the dangers of parking along the roadside and the cheapening effect of petting; but we don't know what they are up to when they are away, and you can't get a word out of them when they get back.

But perhaps most puzzling of all is the fact that young people nowadays don't seem to enjoy the things that young people used to enjoy; they don't stay at home and pop corn or pull taffy; they don't gather around the piano and sing folk songs; they don't look forward to the church sleigh-ride parties and box suppers in winter and the ice-cream socials and Sunday-school picnics in summer; they don't take dignified Sunday-afternoon strolls through the park, or go rowing with pretty parasols to protect them from the sun; they don't play daintily at croquet or lawn tennis; they don't care for parties in a gymnasium or auditorium with crepe-paper decorations. In general, they want to go "tearing around", and they prefer the entertainment offered by commercial places of amusement to anything they might provide for themselves.

But after all, the adolescents of today are merely accepting life as they find it when they make use of commercial amusements. They are not responsible for the opening of motion-picture theaters; they neither invented nor purchased the first automobiles; they are not running the dine and dance restaurants nor the roadhouses. If, as parents, we object to our own adolescents spending their leisure unintelligently, why don't we train them to find enjoyment in activities which we consider more worth while? If, as public-spirited citizens, we object to the exploitation of youth which is practiced on adolescents in general by the worst of commercialized recreation,

why don't we clean up our communities and promote the development of adequate and wholesome public recreational facilities?

There is another point to be made in defense of the modern adolescent's use of leisure; namely, that his parents probably do not use their leisure to much better advantage. They may not go to public dance halls, but, like their young sons and daughters, they probably go to the movies. They may not drive at the rate of 60 miles an hour or park along the roadside, but they, too, regard driving as a form of entertainment. Perhaps they spend their leisure time in rocking chairs on the porch or sitting in front of the radio with the newspaper, or gossiping about neighbors and relatives—none of which activities would have much appeal for the youngster brimming over with vitality and energy.

One of the significant things periods of unemployment have taught us is that many of us adults are pitifully at a loss to know what to do with ourselves when we have ample spare time and little money. As full-time jobs have become part-time jobs and 4 men's work has dwindled to work for 1 man, as vacations without pay have increased in number, and formerly busy professional people have begun to find themselves with more and more free time at their disposal, it has been obvious that our emphasis in training and guidance has been on learning to work rather than on learning to play. We have had vocational guidance but no recreational guidance, and at the moment it looks as if some such aid were very much needed.

Mrs. White complains that her husband mopes around the house day after day. If he would only go down to the beach or take the little ones to the zoo, or do some carpentering, or prepare for some better job by going to night school or taking a correspondence course; but he just sits around, dozing or reading detective stories and getting crosser every day. Mrs. Brown complains that her husband wanders the streets all day long. If he would only spend some of his time giving her a lift with the housework so that she wouldn't get so worn out and tired, things would be easier for both of them, and she wouldn't get cross when he got the blues over his unemployment.

Mrs. White and Mrs. Brown forget that their husbands have been working so hard and so long that they don't know what to do when they're not working; they have not learned to relax, and they have not learned to plan their own time. They are used to having the demands of their job and physical fatigue determine what their activities should be.

It is likely, too, that they, like many of the rest of us, do not quite appreciate the meaning of leisure. The dictionaries define leisure

rather simply as freedom from occupation or employment, but actually there is more to it. Leisure for most of us is freedom that has been earned. Those of us who have been brought up to spend our days working can look forward with pleasure to a summer vacation of 2 or more weeks, or to a Christmas holiday, or to a long weekend in spring. We can enjoy the free time with a pleasurable feeling of having earned the right to sleep late, to sit in the sun, to read in the middle of the morning, to play when we would otherwise be working, or even to plunge energetically into serious preoccupation with the garden, painting the screens, sewing, canning, studying, practicing music, rearranging the furniture, or whatever else the spirit may move us to do. But the moment we are oppressed by a feeling of unpleasant compulsion—when someone begins to fuss and nag and bring pressure to bear, or when our own unreasonable conscience acts as the compelling agent—the element of leisure disappears; and should our vacation continue indefinitely, all these activities would begin to pall because they would no longer be things that could be done only on special occasions. On the contrary, they could be done any day, and so no day might seem exactly the right one.

A period of unemployment must be recognized as fundamentally different from a vacation. One can neither settle down to relaxation and enjoyment of leisure that has been satisfyingly earned, nor rest easy in the security that a job and a means of earning a living and more leisure are waiting at the other end of the 2 weeks. If it is difficult to help the average citizen to learn to play after working hours, it is more difficult to help him to play when he has no work.

It is probably true that many Europeans get far more enjoyment out of small incomes than most Americans do even in times of prosperity. Old or young, in summer or winter, they can put a loaf of bread and a piece of cheese or sausage in a haversack, and with a camera at their side they start out as fourth-class passengers on steamer, train, or tram, and they will probably do a good stint on foot. They have no care for what others may think of them, and they are happy.

That ability to play should be cultivated as a valuable asset for what it would add not only to the individual's ability to enjoy leisure and life in general, but also to his mental health and his ability to adjust to all sorts of situations, even that of unemployment.

#### EDUCATION IN THE USE OF LEISURE

Although leisure is a term that scarcely seems applicable before adolescence, education in the use of leisure begins long before. It begins when father and mother first set aside a Sunday or a holi-

day for an expedition to the zoo or a picnic in the woods, and the children dimly realize that this outing is considered sufficiently entertaining and worth while for their parents to be willing to devote some of their precious leisure time to it. The child who never has such an experience and, on the contrary, comes to realize that his father prefers to spend all his leisure away from home and that his mother considers it impossible to have a good time with the family, is not likely to plan to have his own good time within the family circle. Many fathers and mothers would like to have good times with their children but somehow never do. Some of them think they cannot afford the expense involved; some of them think they have not sufficient time; some of them find children too nerve-racking; some of them do not know what in the world to do with children; and some of them are always intending to do something but never get around to it. The fathers often think this should be mother's job, and the mothers may think they spend enough time with the children day by day without planning special outings.

But raising children is a 2-parent job; and if training in the wise use of leisure is to be a part of child rearing, this, too, is a 2-parent job. Even busy people can plan to set aside a few hours a week for things they really want to do, and it would be just as easy to plan for a little time for activities with the family. Lack of money is not a major obstacle to family good times. As for interesting things to do, the following suggestions may offer some help to parents groping in the dark.

Beginning when the children are still quite small, short trips to the parks can be made great occasions. There are colorful flower gardens to be seen and fascinating fountains; the zoo must be visited and the aquarium; and possibly there is a chance for a boat ride on a pond or a lagoon. Then there is the seashore—or lake shore or river or pond—where a tradition of family bathing parties and picnic suppers can be started at an early age and continued until the children are quite grown up. If the baby is too small to go along and nobody can be found to look after him, let father and mother take turns going out with the children for that particular year. Family habits are established as definitely as individual habits; and if the family once gets into the habit of always letting the baby stand in the way of family companionship, there will be some other excuse when the baby gets older. In winter there are museums to visit, and on special occasions a brief and carefully planned trip to a large department store might be made.

Riding to the "end of the line" has a great attraction for many children. Even a busy father can sometimes be induced to take his boys for a trolley car or "elevated" ride for an hour or two on a

Sunday morning between Sunday school and dinner time. This has the advantage of satisfying the child's curiosity as to "where the car goes" and enabling him to see something of the city, and at the same time giving his mother a bit of respite at the time when it is often most needed.

As the children's curiosity about everyday living increases, father can take them to visit a local fire station, or arrange to have them see the inside of a railroad locomotive. If they are near a harbor, he can take them down to see boats come in and out and load or unload; perhaps they can arrange to see the engine room, or perhaps there are dry docks where boat building may be seen at first hand. If they live near a Coast Guard station, they may see a lighthouse and lifeboats; if they are near an airport or a landing field, they can go down to see airplanes at close range.

Watching how things are made is so fascinating a pastime to adults that almost every large construction project has its audience of interested and critical adults explaining to one another what is going on and expressing admiration of the work or doubts as to the feasibility of the plan. If this is interesting to adults, it is even more worth while to the children, particularly if father is able to explain how things work and what the outcome will be. Excavations for buildings, dredging, road and bridge construction, stone quarrying, projects for raising or moving a building from its foundation, steel construction work—all these will provide profitable and yet inexpensive entertainment for short periods of leisure. Visits may be made to a large market, a local newspaper press, a sawmill, a large bakery, a dairy, an ice-cream factory, and similar local industries. Sometimes it is possible for a group of parents to get together and plan to take turns taking their children on such expeditions. This may add to the fun for the children and may help the individual parent to enter into the thing with more confidence and enthusiasm.

City families do well to make trips to the country to provide their children with opportunities for some first-hand observations of horses, pigs, cows, and chickens. Most city children consider it a rare treat to be allowed to gather eggs, watch the milking, see a windmill in operation, work a pump, and pick fruits and vegetables as they grow.

Families living in the country can offer their children an equally profitable opportunity by arranging for a day in the city, where even the sidewalks, with their limitless opportunities for roller skating, are an exciting, new experience.

Then there are the places of historical interest to be visited; an old fort, battle scenes, monuments, birthplaces of famous people,

Indian mounds, the State capitol, and the historical society. Some communities are far richer than others in such resources; and yet in the most unexpected places one may happen upon a real, old-fashioned blacksmith shop with a ringing anvil, or a primitive mill, which may have interesting associations in addition to being good examples of how the world's work was done in days gone by.

There still remain innumerable special things, such as the flower show, the pet show, the automobile show, the sportsmen's show, the State and county fairs, and all kinds of exhibits. As the individual interests and talents of the children develop, parents will also doubtless wish to foster an appreciative interest in art and music by taking them to concerts and to art galleries.

Most of the things mentioned so far have been things to see rather than things to do, and it may be argued that there is little value for the future in training children to go around looking at things. Even though this objection may be met with the answer that the children are learning to find a satisfying interest in the real activities of life rather than in made-to-order entertainment, it is nevertheless desirable to introduce into a program for leisure time some activities in which they can participate.

Here again parents must take thought early if they look forward to seeing their adolescents enjoying leisure hours at home and in the family. If the children want to play grocery store in the family pantry, shoe store in the family bedrooms, or barber shop in the bathroom; if they want to get out old clothes and "dress up"; if they want to rearrange the furniture in order to play "train", or church, or school; if they want to have a tea party on the porch or make a hut in the backyard, what do we do about it? Do we give them a dime and tell them to run along and not bother us? Do we tell them that we can't have them all over the house and send them out to play in May's yard or on the school playground, or to someone else's house? Do we tell them to stay in their own playroom where they belong with their own toys?

If Tommy invites us to hear him preach his first sermon from a high-chair pulpit, or Helen tries to sell us tickets to the greatest backyard circus in the world, or Peter wishes us to attend the special performance of the junior dramatic society, are we too busy to go?

Of course we cannot be at the constant beck and call of youngsters at play, and we certainly cannot have them carrying our shoes and groceries all over the house or playing with father's shaving brush. But children are quick to learn the rules of any game, and they will play fair if they are well taught. There can be rules about which shoes to use and how not to play with them just as there are rules about checkers; there can be days when the chairs cannot

be made into trains just as there are days when the roller skates are not to be taken out. And as for putting things back where they were found and straightening up afterward—that is a vital part of the philosophy of family living; pajamas are hung up in the morning and soiled clothes put with the laundry; the bathroom is left neat and clean for the next person; and toys that have been taken out are put away when the play hour is over. These things become established customs, and there is no more need for a disordered house or cross words and harassed looks in relation to habits of play than there would be in relation to habits of eating, sleeping, or the toilet.

### ADOLESCENTS AT LEISURE

No matter how pleasant the family life and how much the children enjoy their leisure-time activities with their parents, the normal adolescent, as he grows older, will want to spend more and more time doing things with the boys and girls of his own age and less with his family. This is something to be faced as a fact, and something which parents should be prepared to welcome as a sign that their growing son and daughter are developing in an entirely normal way and making a good adjustment to life. Instead of making all the plans themselves and participating in the activities with their children, parents will now gradually withdraw. The club and the group logically become more important than the family in leisure time. There may still be special occasions when a party with the family and their relatives will be greatly enjoyed, but even on such occasions the adolescent is likely to look around for some other young person of his own age with whom he can remain a little aloof from both grown-ups and children.

The adolescent may continue to enjoy many of the interests stimulated and cultivated at home; but instead of "playing show" with the neighborhood youngsters, he will want to join a junior dramatic club. He will wish to substitute class picnics and Scout hikes for some of the family picnics and walks. Practice with the school band or school orchestra and a real conductor will take precedence over practice at home. In fact, in everything from straight athletics to social dancing the adolescent boy and girl are likely to seek companionship in their own age group. They are beginning to be aware of themselves as individuals and to realize that although they must be part of the family group, they must also be themselves. Moreover, they suspect that they can be themselves more effectively in solitude or in the company of other adolescents than in the presence of a domineering, inquisitive, and critical family. Of course, even

nice families sometimes seem domineering, inquisitive, and critical when one is just beginning to grow up.

There may be a rule—or perhaps a tactful understanding—about the hour for coming home, and parents should certainly know where and with whom their adolescents are spending their time. But they will do well to limit their inquiries as well as their criticisms and corrections to important issues, leaving as many minor decisions as possible in the hands of the adolescents themselves in the hope that their past training and maturing judgment will ultimately win the day.

This is a difficult role for many parents to assume, particularly if they have been counting on more rather than less companionship at this time. Fathers find it hard if they have constantly postponed the day when they would “get acquainted” with their sons, or if they have been looking forward to adolescence as the time when they would begin to make a “pal” of the oldest boy. Mothers find it hard if they have been hoping to relive the experiences of youth through keeping in close touch with their daughters. But unless they face the situation and the needs of their children frankly, and refrain from becoming dependent on them for entertainment and companionship, they must either meet with constant disappointment or gratify their ambitions at a sacrifice of the normal development of their children.

A pathetic example of the folly of counting on one's children may be seen in Mr. B, a kindly, middle-aged father who is completely wrapped up in his young son and hurries home day after day in the hope that this 18-year-old boy will go for a walk or play a game of golf with him. This boy is neither abnormally selfish nor lacking in affection for his father; but having a normal interest in the activities of his friends and fellow classmates, he becomes engrossed in pursuits with them and feels no responsibility toward entertaining his father, who patiently allows himself to be disappointed and hurt again and again.

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Another example is *Isabel's* mother, a young woman who was not satisfied with having lived through her own youth but wanted also to live through the experiences of her daughter. As the latter found herself growing up with tastes and interests of her own which she wished to develop independently of her mother's dominating influence, she withdrew into a shell of privacy which her mother could not enter.

It is in our leisure time that we can be most freely and frankly ourselves, for when we are truly at leisure, we may exercise a choice in our activities. During adolescence more than at any other time, the individual needs the opportunity to exercise this choice, for one of his main objectives is to be himself—to find himself, to reveal his own identity as distinguished from that of his family. If his parents are always wishing to determine his activities or seeking to enjoy



them with him or even for him, his efforts to find himself are frustrated. The mother who bubbles over with enthusiasm over her daughter's parties and the father who gets his "biggest kick" out of his son's touchdown must be careful lest in their mature enjoyment and excitement they seem to make their daughter's parties their own parties, and their son's touchdowns their own touchdowns, leaving the adolescents with nothing for themselves.

Thus the adolescent's need to share experiences with those of his own age, to become independent of his parents and lead his own life, and to protect the evolution of his own personality and individuality seems to require that parents expect less and less companionship and make fewer demands as the children grow older. Education in the use of leisure must be given in childhood. Adolescence is the time when companionship and confidence may be sought by the child or invited by the parent, but it is too late for the parent to force it.

## ASOCIAL CONDUCT

Thus in the twentieth century youth appears to be in conflict with the standards of behavior in home, school, church, and community. (Van Waters, Miriam: Adolescence. *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, vol. 1, pp. 458-459.)

In any discussion with parents of the subject of delinquency, it is important first of all to stress the fact that the subject under consideration is not the confirmed delinquent who has been a more or less constant offender against law and order for a period of years and who has had court records and commitments to institutions. Our concern is rather with that fairly large group of young people who for some reason or other, in their endeavor to get out of life that something in the way of personal satisfaction for which everyone is striving, have introduced into their scheme of living tendencies of a delinquent nature, which, if continued, will eventually bring them into conflict with society.

In dealing with human behavior, whether good or bad, it is essential to appreciate and understand that conduct is always motivated by some inner force. Some environmental factor may be the precipitating cause, but it is the state of mind that determines whether or not trivial and inconsequential events will result in conduct of a disrupting character. The purpose of this section is to indicate in a general way the soil in which delinquent careers are most likely to develop and the particular situations in life that are most likely to act as the spurts which frequently result in disastrous explosions.

It has been pointed out by those interested in juvenile delinquency that chronic offenders usually started on their delinquent careers before reaching the age of adolescence. Probably one half of these offenders came from families that had histories of much asocial activity. Many of these chronic offenders came from homes which were badly disorganized, often to an extent which led the children to leave home at an early age. In considering the soil in which delinquency is likely to develop, it is often found, therefore, that it has been well fertilized with poverty and vice and also by mental and physical inadequacies. This does not mean, of course, that all delinquents spring from such unhappy and inadequate backgrounds. Delinquency may be a problem even in the best-regulated families. The background is but one of the factors that need consideration in the effort to understand conduct. It is obvious, however, that children reared in such an environment would not be likely to ac-

quire the essential habits and personality traits to permit them to meet life in an adequate way during that adolescent period when things matter so much and when experience is so limited.

Besides the family background of the child, one must also consider certain inadequacies and handicaps of the child himself which would tend to make for difficulties in meeting the ordinary demands of life. Illness, mental inadequacy, physical handicaps—such as defects of hearing and vision, residuals of infantile paralysis, a chronic heart condition, and the like—are all particular obstacles which certain individuals have to overcome before they can fit into the social scheme of things successfully. These must be considered carefully in any effort to understand both the contributing and the precipitating factors leading to asocial activity.

It is the method by which these early delinquent trends are handled, rather than the trends themselves, however, that determine whether or not they are eradicated or perpetuated. Relatively few children reach the age of adolescence without having had some experiences that were very definitely of a delinquent type. These isolated, temporary deviations from the straight and narrow path need not be regarded as occasion for alarm, and yet they require wise handling if they are not to be repeated.

There is no one well-defined technique that will work out to the best advantage in all situations. Nor is there any one method of insuring success. The economic situation of the parents is of considerable importance, but neither poverty nor affluence is a determining factor with reference to managing a delinquent wisely. It may be that the son of the affluent parent will be fortunate enough to escape a type of treatment that would be likely to perpetuate, rather than correct, his delinquency. On the other hand, unwise protection may be thrown about him so that he never has to suffer the consequences of his own acts until they reach such magnitude that society itself intervenes and demands that he pay. In the general management of the delinquent cases that come to the attention of the public, too much stress is often given to the family's financial or social standing, many a delinquent being dealt with harshly because of the unsavory reputation of the family; while, on the other hand, family prestige may cause social and political pressure to be brought to bear unwisely and the juvenile offender may not be given needed treatment.

A tendency that leads distinctly away from the wise handling of undesirable conduct but that is nevertheless common among many parents is an unwillingness to face fairly and squarely a situation as it actually exists. This leads to the use of artificially produced excuses. Mary's mother explains that her daughter would not have

stayed out late at night and played about with undesirable company if she had not been led astray by her friend who was older and wiser. Tom's father complains in indignation that the school teacher who expelled his son for cheating had never given the boy a fair deal. Another father attempts to protect his son who has been apprehended for taking an automobile by explaining that it was a boyish prank and that the youngsters had just been out for a lark. A very solicitous mother finds an excuse for the truancy and mild indiscretions of her 13-year-old boy in the fact that he had always been ill and had never had a good time.

It is quite natural for the youth in trouble to accept as a means of protecting himself from criticism these excuses which the self-deceived parent offers; and although he may not accept them as the true reasons for his misdeeds, he nevertheless appreciates that they serve the purpose of letting him off without punishment or reprimand. Notwithstanding that there is a constant and progressive innate tendency leading toward the socialization of the individual, and that asocial activity can be looked upon, in a general way, as self-eliminating, this is not likely to work out in the individual case unless the youth is permitted to learn from his own experiences that his asocial activity does not pay. If, on the contrary, he finds in his delinquencies ways and means of overcoming all the difficulties and hardships in life and of acquiring those things which, for the moment at least, bring pleasure and satisfaction without having to meet the responsibilities that actually attach themselves to such conduct, it is but to be expected that asocial trends will continue.

It must be kept in mind, however, that it is the motive behind the conduct rather than the conduct itself which really matters, and the motives are not always evident upon superficial examination. One of the fundamental and best-known principles of modern psychology is that much conduct, social or asocial, is dominated by motives that lie below the level of consciousness. Conduct is but a striving toward emotional satisfactions—a certain release of energy which, if pent up, leads to tension and a general feeling of discomfort and which can be released only by activity, either physical or mental. There may be several ways of attaining emotional satisfaction through activity. One boy may satisfy his sense of power through bullying, while another would attain the same satisfaction through protecting. It happens that one way is looked upon as being asocial and undesirable and is frowned upon by the group, while the other is approved and applauded. We, therefore, try to eradicate one method and perpetuate the other.

In brief, the effort to eradicate delinquent and asocial trends must include a plan whereby the emotional strivings of the individual will be satisfied in a way that is compatible with the social standards of

the group in which he is living. This training and the accompanying experience are among the most important acquisitions of adolescence. With many of the adolescents it is not difficult to interpret the problems of their age in terms of their inadequate preparation for it. The intensity of their emotions plus the limitations of their experience makes this particular phase of life more trying than any other, and all too frequently the habits and personality traits which were fairly adequate in the protected environment of the home lead to nothing but failure of the most pathetic sort when the child is called upon to meet the broader issues of life.

### STEALING

The following story of 12-year-old Neal, who had gotten into rather severe difficulties on account of stealing, is a good example of how involved the underlying motives may be in what appears to be a very simple, commonplace situation. This lad's difficulties began during his preschool years and were due, in part at least, to the fact that he had never been taught by his parents to differentiate between what was his own and what belonged to others. The fact that he took pennies and food from home and toys from other children made little impression upon his parents and at that time was overlooked because of his immature age. It was also overlooked, or at least given little attention, that he was not well trained in the fundamental habits of life—eating, sleeping, and elimination; that he did not get along well with other children, never entering into competition with them and invariably seeking companions who were younger; and that even at an early age he resorted to masturbation when out of harmony with his environment. Later on the movies and mystery stories were his chief retreats from the realities of life.

As Neal advanced in years, he broadened his field of activities so far as stealing was concerned. He went from the home to his playmates; later on, to stores; and finally he developed and carried out well-laid plans to enter the homes in the neighborhood, taking money in the form of petty cash from pocket-books, toy savings banks, and so forth. It was while on one of these pilfering escapades that he was apprehended. He admitted a long series of delinquencies to his mother; and after a family conference, he was given a series of daily lectures by his father, meanwhile being completely ostracized from his family and having all his meals in his room. The boy was completely bewildered and confused, as well as frightened, by this method of punishment; and although both parents unflinchingly carried out the measures which they thought were best suited to eradicate the "criminal tendencies" in their son, they were depressed and discouraged.

This father was a hard-working, fairly successful business man, who took great pride in his honesty and let it be known that his integrity was beyond reproach. He was a man without interests or friends and entirely dependent upon business for any satisfactions in life. The mother was a high-strung,

nervous, unstable individual who always spoke in superlatives and was primarily concerned about how things would affect her. She was much more concerned about protecting the reputation of the family than in understanding the circumstances and conditions leading up to the difficulties with her son.

These statements with reference to the parents are not made in any sense of condemnation, for the parents, too, were undoubtedly the victims of varied forces over which they had little or no control. The facts are simply stated as they were observed.

In searching for the motive lying back of this lad's delinquencies, one is impressed by the fact that he never took more than seemed to be necessary for the needs of the moment, regardless of how much was available. He spent little upon himself. He was sharing generously with a small group of recently acquired friends, and the money he stole gave him an entree to this group which otherwise would have been denied. This shy, self-conscious, poorly equipped boy, without interests or abilities recognized by those of his age, and out of harmony with his family, had also suffered by comparison with his well-mannered, obedient sister, who was the favorite in the family. He had never been trained in habits leading to self-assurance and self-esteem, which, in turn, would have permitted him to assume responsibility. He was simply utilizing the same technique which he had used all his life in the home and which had been overlooked by parents afraid of meeting the situation frankly.

It had not taken Neal long to find out that human contacts with others of his own age and a little social recognition from those whom he admired could be purchased, for the time being at least, by this asocial activity. Had the boy's problem been frankly met and adequately dealt with—that is, had he been assisted in finding more suitable means of gaining recognition in a socially approved way through games, social contacts, friendship, development of habits and intellectual achievements that were all within his grasp—the prognosis would have been much better and both boy and family much happier. Even as the situation existed, the same plan of educating both parents and boy to meet life on a more mature level was followed, but the advice in this case had to come from outside the home rather than from the parents themselves.

The important aspect of the whole situation is the fact that stealing in this particular case was not an end in itself, but simply a means of satisfying one of the instinctive strivings common to all, whether children or adults; namely, the desire for recognition. In the process of growing up, the well-trained child develops a variety of tools which are admirably suited for this purpose, and he does not have to resort to asocial conduct to gain attention.

The case just cited differs in many respects from that of *Wendell*, a 17-year-old boy whose family background was excellent and whose parents were successful, happy, well stabilized. Up to the time that he was dismissed from school for stealing, he was himself what might be called a well-adjusted adolescent; that is, he enjoyed good health, was a fair athlete, had a pleasing personality, made friends easily, and enjoyed the reputation of being well liked and getting on easily with people.

In the new environment of a boarding school, *Wendell's* suddenly acquired freedom tended toward the development of appetites that soon outgrew his

pocketbook; and in spite of his early training, he drifted into irresponsible ways and was soon detected in appropriating the property of other students. These thefts were carried out only after careful planning and premeditation, and what he appropriated was spent, to a very large extent, upon himself.

This boy's conduct was entirely out of harmony with his previous training. He feared detection and consequently resorted to lying. He worried a great deal about the final day of reckoning. There seemed to be no deep underlying conflicts in life in this particular case to account for the boy's delinquencies, and he showed a marked sense of relief when he was detected and had the opportunity of starting all over even with the world, so to speak. Subsequent events have indicated that stealing in this boy's life was a rather transitory phase. As the cooperation of wise parents and a sympathetic headmaster could be counted on, and as the boy was without fundamental handicaps or emotional conflicts, there was little reason to believe that this boy would have any further difficulties with reference to stealing.

The fact that the detection of the stealing brought Wendell in contact with someone who was interested in the problems of young people and that his parents were reawakened to their own personal responsibilities presented an opportunity to this boy for taking account of stock, not only with reference to his stealing but in regard to many other problems in life. Thus the whole incident undoubtedly served a very useful purpose.

It is not uncommon to see superior and well-trained boys, coming from good homes with intelligent parents, occasionally getting into serious difficulties through participation in gang life. As one studies these situations, one is struck by the fact that many of these lads suffer from feelings of inferiority. They have a tendency to drift to a lower social and economic level, where they can make friends and perhaps assume some leadership with a minimum amount of effort. They feel the necessity of demonstrating to themselves, as well as to others, that they are not inadequate, and one way of doing this is by assuming a "hard-boiled" attitude. They have a fear of being called "yellow." They want to demonstrate their leadership by something that is spectacular and will demand attention. The asocial activity of this particular group of boys needs most careful consideration, as such boys are likely to become the tools later on for those more cunning and shrewd individuals who dominate gang life. Often these youngsters are actually terrified after their escapades. They eat poorly, their nights are sleepless, they are constantly worried and agitated, and they are much relieved when they get up courage enough to confide in friend or parent or even when they have been detected. Parents who are on intimate terms with their children can recognize the early symptoms of these feelings of inferiority in their children and make every attempt to find ways and means of substituting activities that will offer opportunities of achieving legitimate success.

Stealing is undoubtedly less common with girls than with boys. Girls have less demand upon them for money during the adolescent period, their contacts are less likely to be of the type which would present opportunities for stealing, and gang life, as we understand it, is a less important aspect of the girl's life than of the boy's. However, stealing occurs among girls with sufficient frequency to be worthy of serious consideration.

The desire for self-adornment and for appearing well dressed is oftentimes the motivating force behind much of the petty thieving that occurs among girls in boarding schools and colleges, and the stealing itself is oftentimes characterized by an impulsiveness which is less common in boys.

*Geraldine* was a young girl who had always had a reputation for honesty and had always respected the property rights of others. One day while visiting a large department store she impulsively and clumsily appropriated a ring from a tray which was being displayed to prospective customers. Upon being confronted with the theft, she immediately confessed but developed conflicts from her own unworthiness which were more or less incapacitating for several weeks. This particular isolated asocial act was entirely out of harmony with her own ideals and the fundamental moral attitudes which she had always had toward life.

A 16-year-old girl, whose case was discussed in *Child Management* (p. 41), was brought to court on a charge of breaking and entering. Investigation showed that on three occasions she had gone to the house of her best friend and stolen wearing apparel, skates, and a ring, all of which she had carefully hidden away and made no attempt to use or sell. A rather long, detailed story of the case revealed the fact that, in spite of her extreme fondness for her friend, she had times when she became intensely jealous of her, especially when the other girl appeared in new clothes which her own parents could not afford to buy. It was after such periods of jealousy that she committed the thefts.

### INCORRIGIBILITY

There is a group of adolescents who, in spite of good intellectual equipment, excellent health, and what appears to be a satisfactory environment, have a mental make-up that is characterized by a sense of resentment of authority, irresponsibility, cruelty, and pugnacity. These individuals are invariably unstable emotionally, and with their sudden changes in mood and conduct, they are very difficult individuals to deal with successfully. The court looks upon them as being incorrigible, meaning that they do not respond to the ordinary methods of correction. The psychiatrists call them psychopathic personalities, constitutional inferiors, psychopaths, and various other names that add little to understanding of the forces tending to



produce conduct so bizarre and purposeless. Despite their unhappy mental attitude toward life, these individuals frequently resent any effort on the part of parents or outsiders to help them. There is a gulf between their ambitions and their achievements. They are anxious to grow up all at once and often regard being "hard-boiled" as evidence of manhood. In spite of their bullying, bragging, and egotism, they are lacking in self-confidence and self-assurance; yet they assume the attitude that they are right and the world is wrong, and they utilize every conceivable method they can in getting even with their unjust world.

Invariably the parents become the victims of these moods. This is quite naturally so, as these individuals have learned from experience that parents are more tolerant than the general public and therefore safer to defy. Through fear or ignorance parents may then neglect to take a firm stand and so continue to be humiliated and persecuted. They present the most difficult cases to deal with—cases in which parents arouse antagonism and resentment in those whom they are trying to help. Regardless of how sincere their intentions may be, such parents are apt to be hurt and crushed. It is for one outside the family, free from passion and prejudice, to deal with these situations. But more important and less difficult than treatment is prevention.

Adolescent reactions of this type are not developed overnight. They begin fairly early in life, and it is not difficult for parents to see the early evidences of dissatisfaction. The child who begins to build up petty grievances, who is always complaining of not getting a square deal at school, not being liked by the children, being slighted at parties, being discriminated against by parents, who is always calling himself down and in a general way taking a critical view of life, is manifesting the early symptoms of a state of mind that is likely to become more and more a fixed part of his personality make-up as he advances in years.

As parents, we must keep in mind that defiance and sullenness cannot be overcome by force and disciplinary measures. Neither does moralizing serve any useful purpose when the child's attitude toward life is twisted and warped by his confusion and dissatisfaction. This situation calls for supreme patience on the part of the parents. They must think in terms, for the moment at least, of making the child happy rather than either obedient or efficient. This can best be done by helping the child regain his self-confidence, restore his self-esteem, and overcome his tendency toward developing ideas of inadequacy. It is essential that parents take account of the child's assets, placing him, as much as possible, in situations where these assets can be used to best advantage. It is well, too, for them

to attempt to eliminate sources of friction and to withdraw, so far as it is compatible with the child's safety, much of their parental authority. All too frequently these rebellious youngsters need at least a momentary freedom in order that they may demonstrate to themselves that freedom is only a means to an end and not an end in itself.

It is striking that this particular group of unhappy, resentful adolescents invariably react worse in the home situation than anywhere else. For this reason, they impress their elders painfully with their ingratitude, selfishness, and oftentimes cruelty. All these traits, however, are quite as distasteful to the child as to the parent. This is particularly true when the parents happen to be the type of individuals who interpret everything that happens in an environment in terms of how it affects themselves.

*Sylvester's* father had habitually utilized force and disciplinary measures in meeting all family problems and was tremendously upset when his 17-year-old boy suddenly and quite unexpectedly retaliated, meeting the father's reprimand by becoming insolent, defiant, and, a little later, opening a fistic combat. After completely subduing the father, he made clear in no uncertain terms the extent to which he resented the physical force which the father had been using over a period of years, and the hatred which this had built up. He also made it clear that he considered himself the unfavored member of the family and that he resented all the attention given to his younger sister.

The real conflict between the father and son was due to the fact that this well-developed, rather sophisticated lad had been trying hard to grow up all of a sudden. He had sought the companionship of older boys, had participated with them in some smoking and drinking, and had been playing about with a group of boys and girls who were definitely older than he. The father, however, still looked upon this lad, who was fast approaching adult life in his thought and experiences, as a mere child and continued to assert authority over him that would only have been justified had he been 10 years younger. He was impressed with the necessity of breaking this rebellious spirit and bringing the boy into submission before it was too late.

We oftentimes make the mistake of endeavoring to do a job in a few days that really requires months, forgetting that although some habits can be eradicated in a short time, sometimes in a few days, personality traits and mental attitudes toward life lend themselves less readily to abrupt changes.

The real conflicts that lead to unmanageableness may not manifest themselves until the child finds out, through leaving home, how inadequately he has been prepared to meet life as it actually exists.


*Laura* had apparently made a perfectly good adjustment to home life, but she found on entering college that the protective, oversolicitous attitude of her parents had not provided the training which would permit her to fit in and assume the social responsibilities of other girls of her age. Upon returning home for her vacation she became extremely resentful and critical of her parents, holding them responsible for sending her to college with such a limited knowl-

edge of life in general. She blamed them for her unhappiness, for her lack of friends, and for various humiliating situations which she had encountered while away from home. She criticized the home, she ridiculed the father's income as being insufficient to provide a decent home, and she commented sarcastically on all their opinions and beliefs. Her resentment was expressed only in words, however, and not in deeds. Her chief satisfaction was in demonstrating her power to hurt her parents. Underneath this turbulent attitude the girl was shy, diffident, and retiring; she had none of the pseudosophisticated habits or attitudes considered as characteristic of rebellious adolescents; and her chief concern in life was the fear that she was not like other girls.

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The grievances of these unmanageable children, however, are not always directed toward parents. *Wilfred's* were, for example, all directed toward the school authorities. At 15 years of age he had a record of either having run away or having been expelled from four different boarding schools in a period of 3 years after having first expressed his feelings about his teachers and the schools in notes written in such profane and obscene language that expulsion was inevitable. This was perhaps an indirect way of humiliating his parents, who had not created a home life for him but had instead traveled about seeking pleasure and satisfactions in which he had no part. This particular boy had always wanted a home, had felt the need of his parents, and had resented the fact that these schools had been offered to him as substitutes for a home.

The foregoing cases indicate that in order to solve the conduct disorders of youth one must be sufficiently interested to take time to determine what these asocial activities really mean to the child. Most of this type of behavior can be modified to the advantage of all concerned as soon as the conduct is thought of as a symptom which has its basis in an unsatisfactory adjustment between the child and his environment. The rebellious, delinquent, poorly adjusted child is invariably an unhappy child.



## EVADING REALITY

In the tragic conflict between what he has been taught to desire and what he is allowed to get, man has found in alcohol, as he has found in certain other drugs, a sinister but effective peacemaker, a means of securing, for however short a time, some way out of the prison house of reality back to the Golden Age. (Trotter, William: *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War*, p. 58. Macmillan Co., New York, 1926.)

There is a large army of individuals who are incapacitated to a greater or less degree for meeting the ordinary everyday problems of life not because of any impairment of their intellectual faculties nor because of any physical conditions or disease which can be revealed by clinical examination, but because they have become the victims of an emotional outlook upon life which leads them to evade reality.

Many of the manifestations of an evasion of reality are found in individuals who have failed to grow up, who have been inadequately prepared through training and experience to meet life on the level which their chronological age would indicate. It is therefore important that in the process of training children parents beware of the subtle techniques which children utilize at an early age to avoid meeting the difficult situations in life.

The child who in early life has learned to use temper tantrums as a way of gaining his own end, who avoids an unpleasant school situation by vomiting or having stomachaches, who always has the ever-convenient headache when called upon to assume some responsibility, is manifesting the first evidences of such tendencies.

Parents who are intimately acquainted with their children, who are familiar with their habitual reactions to life, should be the first to notice any unusual deviation from the normal which would be the first indication that the adolescent is in need of help. The tendency to evade reality may take various forms, such as romancing, daydreaming, cheating, running away, drinking, and similar manifestations which frequently give concern to parents of adolescent boys and girls.

### DAYDREAMING AND ROMANCING

Both daydreaming and romancing are common methods used by adolescents to evade unsatisfactory situations through a retreat into the world of phantasy.

Daydreaming is indulged in at some time or other by almost everybody and need not be a dangerous pastime for the adolescent unless he prefers his daydreams to normal contacts with other young people or seeks in them a means of escape from inner conflicts and feelings of inadequacy. Romancing, which is but daydreaming aloud, may be defined as an attempt on the part of the individual to bolster up his self-regard and the esteem in which he desires to be held by others by fabricating tales which enhance his prestige, add influence or distinction to his family background, and in general exaggerate his own importance. Romancing is a less dangerous method than daydreaming of compensating for feelings of inadequacy, because it has the advantage of being detectable before it becomes too deeply rooted in the personality make-up of the individual.

The adolescent who makes excursions into the land of unreality may be less annoying to his elders than the one who indulges in temper tantrums or other types of vexatious behavior, but such practices may be fundamentally more harmful to healthy mental development. Boys and girls should be helped to realize that they can win the recognition they desire through active effort in some given field rather than through such unsatisfactory methods as romancing and daydreaming.

#### CHEATING

The habit of cheating and the tendency toward evasion are utilized by children, adolescents, and adults in attempting to attain certain objectives in life without making the necessary effort; they are found in those individuals who are constantly seeking "short cuts to prosperity." Such conduct is not uncommonly found in schools and colleges with reference to examinations. One child may cheat in order to get passing marks, while another individual will cheat in order to stand at the head of the class. There are those who are always seeking the opportunity to "put it over" the person who happens to be in authority, whether it is the parent, the teacher, the counselor, or the employer.

The love of winning or the inability to lose gracefully—that attitude called poor sportsmanship—may lead to difficulties in this direction; so will an exaggerated desire for power and recognition and for freedom. The inability that many individuals have to meet any situation frankly, that is, just as it exists, also leads to cheating, evasiveness, and lying. Cheating is an individual's attempt to obtain under false pretenses something which he fears he could not get by more honest methods.

The tendency to practice evasion is seen in most children at some time or other. It is unfortunate that parents are inclined to look

upon this tendency lightly, calling these attempts cute tricks and bolstering up their own fears with the idea that the tendency will soon be outgrown. The parent who allows the child to evade carrying out his part of a contract, whether it be doing certain chores about the house, accepting praise for something he has not accomplished, or keeping the change that he should return after doing an errand, is permitting that child to entertain false ideas with reference to his obligations and responsibilities to others. It should also be remembered that one can be quite as dishonest in dealing with time as in dealing with money or examinations.

It is important to inculcate a sense of fair play at an early age in order that the child may develop the habit of looking at life frankly and honestly, sizing up the prospective difficulties and pitfalls and planning how to meet them. It is not difficult for even very young children to learn that the practice of deception rarely works out to their advantage. It is perfectly true that certain individuals may be confronted with a situation where cheating represents an unrepeatable incident in their lives; but by the time the child reaches the adolescent age, these isolated experiences which bear little relation to the best moral standards of the individual are rare. They are more likely to occur in those individuals who suddenly and unexpectedly are confronted with keen competition and resort to this unfair method as a way of "putting themselves across."

In the school, cheating is often carried on by students bringing material into the classroom for aid in examination, or by copying from another pupil. A rather common form of cheating is presenting themes and other written work as original when, as a matter of fact, they are copied. Even at the college age themes that have been copied word for word are often handed in as a student's own effort. Oftentimes such experiences lead to a very serious conflict, as in the case of a college girl who was so much upset by the fact that she had repeatedly cheated in the examination room without being detected, that she voluntarily admitted the fact to the head of the course, much to her own relief.

In games and sports there are also various ways of cheating. One of the more subtle was observed in Gilbert, a 14-year-old lad who was a fairly good athlete but a poor sport. He excelled in tennis; but on several occasions when he was threatened with defeat, he would refuse to continue a match on the ground that his eyes were bothering him. Repeated examinations by a specialist indicated that the affected eyesight was but a way of avoiding actual defeat.

These few examples bring out the fact that it is tremendously important for children to learn how to meet failure as well as success in early life. There is a tendency on the part of those interested

in children to stress the value of success, and this is important. But the child who has never learned how to meet defeat and disappointment is poorly equipped to battle with life.

### TRUANCY

Pushed by the spirit of the "wanderlust", many of the more venturesome children seek adventure and new experiences outside their immediate environment. These individuals are less concerned about their security than the average boy or girl. They seem to have an inherent hunger to investigate all that is strange and new. Their homes may be good, their parents just, and they themselves without any deep underlying conflict. Truancy in these cases is but the response to a deep underlying urge to satisfy something that is closely allied to curiosity. On the other hand, a certain number of truant individuals are not running to something but away from something, and in this group truancy and delinquency often go hand in hand. Truancy in these situations is but the result of conflict between the individual and his environment. When the home atmosphere is unhappy because of constant friction and emotional tension or when punishment is severe and unjust or when failure in school with its accompanying humiliation is inevitable, or when the individual is in the grip of a feeling of inadequacy, truancy may be an escape closely allied to alcohol, illness, and other similar types of escape utilized later in life.

It is the state of mind that activates truancy rather than the truancy itself which must be looked upon as the vital and dangerous aspect of the situation. This state of mind is exemplified by Norman, a 16-year-old boy with a good average intellectual equipment.

*Norman* had enjoyed good health until he was about 8 years of age with the exception of a chronic asthmatic condition which restricted his athletic activities. He was the son of a highly skilled mining engineer who was a friendly, kindly individual, but who, for some reason, failed to understand this boy and offered him but little companionship. His mother was an emotionally unstable woman and had been steeped in deep sorrow for 5 years on account of the loss of Norman's younger brother. His school work had been average, or a bit better, up to the time he was 14, when he was kept out of school on account of a severe infection. Upon his return he had apparently lost not only much ground but all his interest in school work. He was resentful about being left behind his classmates, and this attitude reflected itself in his conduct in the home. He became extremely critical of his father, demanding in his attitude toward his mother, resentful toward all criticism, and rebellious toward authority; he lost many of his friends, became extremely unhappy, and was given to short periods of depression.

It was during such periods of depression that he first began to disappear from home. After not letting his parents know where he was for several days at a time, he would telegraph for money. These episodes of running

away were causing his parents so much anxiety that they were both on the verge of a breakdown.

Fortunately this boy had some ability in drawing that had been recognized by a friend of the family who was in a position to place him with a competent instructor away from home. He was advised to leave school and build his life around this real interest, and thus his problem was solved in a most satisfactory way.

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An isolated example of truancy from camp may be seen in the case of *Lincoln*, a 15-year-old boy whose father attempted to place him in a camp against his will, thinking that as soon as the boy was happily settled the experience would work out to his advantage. Under the pretense of seeing a friend, the boy was inveigled to visit a camp with his father. After spending the afternoon happily with the group he found that his father had slipped away, leaving him in charge of the camp director. This method of leave-taking was not in keeping with the frankness which had been displayed between father and son up to this time, and the boy was much upset. He took the first opportunity of leaving the camp, much to his father's dismay. Here the father resorted to a plan of deception not unlike some of the very practices which he was most earnestly endeavoring to overcome in the boy.

It is not infrequent to find parents, either habitually or in desperation, as in the above case, doing this very thing, meeting anger with anger and deception with more deception. Such a plan may work out for the moment, but it will not ultimately be successful. Frankness may make for temporary rebellion, but it never destroys the confidence and respect which are essential for the happy relation between the adult and the adolescent.

### DRINKING

If the adolescent is introduced to alcohol, it is invariably through his social activities, and his continued use of it is likely to be a symptom of some inadequacy and instability. For the less courageous, those who feel inferior, it is the most dangerous weapon with which they can play, as it temporarily bolsters up their courage, gives them a transient sense of well being and a false sense of importance, and relieves them of certain painful inhibitions only to leave them pitifully weak and helpless without it.

Rarely can the problem be adequately met by disciplinary measures, deprivation of freedom, or moralizing tactics. The best safeguard that parents can throw about the adolescent to prevent indiscretion in the use of alcohol is education, and the best method of education is good example.

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One of life's earliest, most difficult, and most painful lessons is that we cannot indulge without discrimination the varied impulses and desires that are constantly being aroused and seeking avenues



of expression without getting into trouble with society or creating conflicts within ourselves. Long before we appreciate just why we should not pull the covers off the table, hurl the ornaments about the room, pinch, squeeze, and annoy younger members of the family, run blindly out into the crowded street, take candy, food, or money which does not belong to us, or do innumerable other things, we learn that such behavior brings swift and painful punishment or in some way or other works out to our disadvantage.

The great masses of the boys and girls of this country, with a newly acquired freedom, with unbounded opportunity for liberty and license, associated with a realization of the force that they are capable of exerting upon the community, have taken their newly acquired privileges, all of them laden with the stuff that just naturally leads to revolt, and have managed themselves with wisdom that should demand more respect and less criticism from adults, whose criticism is, after all, bred of fear of what is going to happen next.

## THE ADOLESCENT AND HIS COMPANIONS

They seem to take away the sun from the world who withdraw friendship from life. (Cicero.)

### THE IMPORTANCE OF FRIENDS

There is no phase in the individual's life in which friends count more than during the adolescent period. As has been pointed out, this stage of development in the child's life is characterized by intensity of feeling in combination with lack of experience to guide and direct these intense emotions with the wisdom of more mature years. There can be many substitutes for intimate friendships during childhood—brothers and sisters, parents, and the innumerable individuals with whom the child meets in the daily routine; likewise in adulthood, one's family, business, and other interests, or one's philosophy of life may make intimate friendships unnecessary. It is extremely difficult, however, for the adolescent to accept anything in place of his chum, his pal, his buddy, or whatever else he may call that individual in whom he can confide with absolute assurance of receiving a sympathetic hearing and being understood.

The need for intimate associations with those of one's own age is greater during this period, because adolescents are apt to entertain the idea that they are but little understood by the adult world. Thus the boy or girl who in the process of development has not acquired those personal characteristics which are essential to making friends is a pathetic figure. He represents one of the real catastrophes of life, and his situation is one of the most difficult to face, for although he appreciates his own needs he may fail entirely to understand why he does not measure up.

It is unfortunate indeed that those traits or lack of traits in one's personality make-up which are essential in building up the close personal contacts which we look upon as friendships, are very often dependent upon environmental situations over which the individual has no control until the damage has been done. Yet, as one sees children during their early life, one may be easily aware of the fact that there are also inherent traits which apparently allow one group of children to be responsive to attention and to react with pleasure, while the other group tends to withdraw, reject, and be offended by quite the same overtures. The fact that these responses to life are exaggerated by the environment—that is, that attention

is invariably given where it is appreciated—is obvious to all who are concerned with the behavior of children.

Certain mental characteristics, or personality traits, are found sufficiently often, however, in these friendless, lonesome individuals to make it seem only fair to assume that these traits in themselves represent the barrier between the child and the social group with whom he is brought in contact. There is, for example, the shy, diffident, reserved youngster who is inclined to be very introspective, who is extremely sensitive not only to the impressions that he makes upon the world but to the impressions that the world makes upon him. Everything seems to register, and everything that registers must necessarily be analyzed; it is in the process of examining and tearing these ordinary, everyday situations apart that the individual becomes more and more self-centered. Later in life he develops feelings of inferiority and inadequacy; he is prone to be unduly critical about himself, not infrequently setting his standards for himself so high that failure is inevitable.

The question arises: What are the environmental situations that are likely to produce this state of mind in the child when he is called upon to confront life during the adolescent period? As has been stated, the family may be substituted for friends during early life; but it is not uncommon for parents to put such a value on family life and to derive so much pleasure and satisfaction from their children that they very selfishly hold them too close to the family circle. Home life may be made so pleasant and attractive and in subtle ways so easy during the early years of life that there is little incentive for the child to reach out and make intimate contacts with the outside world. Then, too, the child may be cut off from outside contact at a very important period in life because of some accident or illness which makes a temporary invalid of him, so that after recovery he may find it difficult to pick up the thread of social relationships where it was dropped. The fact that parents move about and that the place of residence is frequently changed, or possibly changed at a rather critical time in the child's life, is another factor worthy of consideration. This important aspect of the child's life should always be kept in mind when a change of schools is under consideration. To be taken away at the age of 8 or 9 from the group with whom he has played about for 3 or 4 years is a real calamity to one child, while another child will immediately make a place for himself in the new situation without any difficulty whatsoever.

In some homes neighborliness and intimate contacts are frowned upon. Parents do not encourage their children to visit other children nor to bring other children home, fearing that such visiting

may involve some social obligation with the parents of these other boys and girls. There is a lack of cordiality in such a home that cannot but affect certain children in their early relationships with others. In other homes there is a critical attitude toward the neighbors' children and toward the neighbors themselves that is also restraining. For example, Johnny may be told that the children of one family are too dirty and rough or too indecent in their language to play with, other children are to be avoided because their families are economically or socially inferior, and another group may be undesirable because of racial or religious differences. Some families simply fall back on their old conclusion that John gets along so much better and causes so much less trouble if he keeps by himself; he either gets excited or uses bad words, or comes in all tired out or unpardonably dirty when he is allowed to participate in the activities of the group. These excuses are born of twisted, snobbish, arrogant, or intolerant attitudes on the part of certain parents, or are resorted to in an effort to make the job of rearing children as easy as possible. They are all, however, important factors in the development of certain traits that interfere with making friendships easily in later life.

Following is an example of yet another way in which an individual's ability to make friends may be unwittingly interfered with early in life:

*Lydia* was a bright, attractive child with a keen desire for friendships, but at the age of 16 years she was still too shy and diffident to make a place for herself with other girls.

Having lost her mother very early in life, she was brought up by her father and an elderly grandmother. The former disliked groups of people, preferring not to have more than one person around at a time; the latter was hypersensitive to noise of any kind and thought "children should be seen and not heard."

In such an environment *Lydia* had little opportunity for cultivating friendships by inviting people to her own home. Moreover, she had no opportunity for developing the self-confidence necessary to enable her to approach the girls with whom she much wanted to be friends. These girls, on the other hand, completely failed to understand her and made no effort to become more closely acquainted with her. It was little wonder that she began to feel that she must be different from other girls, and then that she must be inferior to them.

It is the individual of this type who reads with alternate despair and hope the magazine advertisements picturing the unpopular boy or girl and assuring the reader that the use of the right soaps, creams, deodorants, pomades, antiseptics, and cigarettes, and a study of the right books on etiquette, grammar, and literature will prevent this casualty.

Personal cleanliness and fastidiousness are indeed important in helping the individual to get on with people. A report of a school for truant boys contains the sad record of a lad who had run away from his school because the offensive odor from a catarrhal condition had made him subject to the persecutions of his classmates. Such problems doubtless stand in the way of the adolescent's social adjustment more frequently than parents realize. They are things to be watched for, and appropriate suggestions and advice should be offered. But the ability to make and keep friends is not solely dependent on good habits of health, cleanliness, and grammar; some people make friends in spite of lacking such good habits, whereas others fail in spite of having them. Let us by all means encourage good hygiene and personal fastidiousness, but let us also encourage individual personality development through intelligent, sympathetic, and unselfish guidance.

### “CRUSHES”

While some adolescents need help in learning to make friends at all, others need help in learning to maintain a sense of balance in their friendships. They must learn to keep their interest open in many people instead of centering all their attention, affection, admiration, and devotion in one person of their own sex.

Adolescent crushes are very common and can usually be looked upon as a normal phase of development. There are, however, a certain number of these intimate relationships between individuals of the same sex that either because of their intensity or because of their duration require serious consideration. Parents and teachers oftentimes need to use great care and judgment in handling these situations in order that they may be most helpful to those who quite innocently become involved in some alliance which might become quite disastrous to the parties involved.

Crushes that continue are of significance not because of any undesirable activity but because of their interference with the natural, normal, healthy development of broad social contacts which are of special importance during this period in life. These intense emotional reactions between those of the same sex, more commonly seen in girls than in boys, are all-absorbing and in most cases leave no time nor interest for other social contacts. At best, when one of those involved gets a more mature outlook on life and seeks a broader field for personal relationships with both boys and girls, the other is invariably hurt.

As will be seen in some of the case discussions, while the crush is on, any attempt to break it up or interfere in any way is met with open rebellion. Any criticism directed by friends or family is re-

sented. The parties to the experience glory in their loyalty toward each other. Invariably they entertain the idea that this relationship is something given to them alone, that no one has ever before experienced the joy of such a friendship, and that, therefore, no one else is capable of understanding it. Quite rightly they resent any intimation that there is anything wrong or bad about this relationship. To those caught emotionally in this snare, it symbolizes all that is good and worth while. Helping these young people to get a proper perspective of this particular problem in relation to the entire life situation is therefore a delicate task.

Fortunately when the fires burn so intensely, they do not last long, and most of these crush situations are self-eliminating. If managed wisely, they do no harm. It is not so much the crush itself that needs careful consideration as the individuals participating in it. When such a relationship exists between individuals who because of their shyness, diffidence, and lack of confidence are unable to "put themselves across" in a normal way with the group, it requires all the skill and ingenuity of the adults who are trying to help them to find ways and means of developing new interests which may serve as a diversion while these young people are finding themselves.

The family must be tolerant and not give the impression by word or by deed that they are persecuting either party. They may judiciously introduce other young people of interest into the home life or arrange for a visit that would temporarily separate the two young people. Plans for a summer at camp might be considered, depending upon the situation and the extent to which the affair has developed. Whatever may be the plan, it will require nice judgment and much toleration and patience, but it will be worth the effort. The future happiness of these adolescents may depend upon establishing their lives on a more satisfactory basis rather than one which is narrow and emotional.

*Alice* was a very attractive, intelligent young girl, 16 years of age, who was causing her parents a great deal of concern because she had developed a very resentful attitude toward authority, was extremely antagonistic toward all suggestions, and seemed hypercritical toward life in general. This young person had lived rather a secluded life and had made but few contacts with young people, either boys or girls. Then very suddenly she had developed an intense admiration for a girl who was somewhat older than herself and who came from a somewhat lower social and cultural level. The older girl was flattered by *Alice's* attentions, invitations, letters, and gifts and clung quite as closely to *Alice* as did *Alice* to her.

All attempts on the part of *Alice's* parents to meet this problem first by teasing and ridicule, later by threats, punishments, and deprivations, served no useful purpose. They did nothing more than make this young person feel that the object of her devotion was being maligned and persecuted. It was never suspected by the family that the girl herself had a good many conflicts over

this relationship, that she was eager to broaden her contacts, and that she was extremely desirous of having friends among boys as well as girls. On account of the circumstances under which she had been brought up and a certain inherent shyness and diffidence, a special effort had to be made on the part of her parents to help her meet the young people among whom such friendships could develop. This they were perfectly willing to do when they understood the emotional nature of the problem.

The teacher is often able to offer assistance in these situations because she may approach the subject with these young people in a perfectly natural and unemotional way by discussing the subject of friendships—the importance of first making broad general contacts which are interesting and profitable in an educational way and then of cultivating the more intimate relationships upon which men and women place great value all through life. The disadvantages of cutting one's self off from the broad social contacts of the school, the community, or the camp for the sake of devoting one's time to any one individual can be made quite clear, and it is not difficult to explain how these emotional tie-ups between those of the same sex often lead away from a well-rounded-out life in the future. There may be particular reasons for going into the subject more deeply; it may be brought out, for instance, that one may get in the habit of avoiding contact with those of the opposite sex because of the ease and satisfaction with which the present relationship can be carried on, and that one may thus close the door to healthy contacts leading to normal mating, marriage, children, and a home.

These emotional situations must never be looked upon as occasions which necessitate trying to make young people good through fear of consequences. They represent just another opportunity for the parents and the child to get together and discuss the whole situation and all its implications in an unemotional way. The task of passing through that immature stage where autoerotic tendencies and crushes play an important part in life confronts every adolescent and is a difficult one for many of these young people. They fear to take the next step forward, oftentimes being filled with a feeling that they are unable to meet it adequately.

But they are very quick to grasp any real understanding which their elders may have of the problem and to reach out for help when they have reason to believe that it is available.

Many of the doubts and misgivings these young people have with reference to taking the next step in their social development are due to the fact that their early experiences in their own homes have prejudiced them against marriage. A mother whose marital life has been unhappy and whose dissatisfactions have been an ever-present example to her children, who presents marriage, particularly the sex aspect of it, as something to be avoided, is a tremendous

obstacle to the normal, healthy development of her sons and daughters. Such childhood experiences are the most common factors leading to social immaturity in these unhappy children. The development of a normal, happy, well-adjusted sex life in young people is more dependent upon the examples they have before them than on all the instruction one can give.

### BOY AND GIRL RELATIONSHIPS

With the advent of the coeducational system in the schools and the discovery that participation in athletics would not incapacitate girls for performing their major function in life, a more normal and natural everyday relationship between boys and girls was inevitable. Seeing each other under the prosaic circumstances of 8 o'clock classes, playing at the same games, working side by side whether on class plays or on school annuals, studying the same subjects, boys and girls came to a clearer understanding of each other. Boys soon discarded the Victorian conception of femininity and, instead of regarding girls as vague and mysterious combinations of physical frailty, intellectual stupidity, and frigid spirituality, they accepted them as "pals", companions, and friends, while girls responded with a frankness bred of their own more honest recognition of boys.

This closer acquaintanceship between the sexes cannot but be regarded as wholesome. In the world of today men and women must work and play side by side. How will they learn to do this if they spend their entire youth carefully isolated from each other, fed on mysterious illusions of differences that may not exist? The element of romance with which young people wish to endow each other in their love relationships need not be lacking because of the better acquaintance of boys and girls in general; on the contrary, being adequately protected against endowing all girls or all boys with glamor, they should be better able to discriminate in their choice of the particular partner they seek.

Friendships between boy and girl, as between girl and girl, generally prove of greater value and greater happiness in the plural than in the singular during adolescence.

Parents are likely to be most concerned over the sexual significance of these relationships. This being true, they express great anxiety over the much-discussed subject of petting.

We shall probably all agree that there is nothing particularly new about this practice of petting, excepting for the fact that it is now practiced more generally among those who are considered nice people, that it has become more of a pastime and perhaps less well defined as a step leading to matrimony, and finally that it is no longer a practice reserved for the subdued lights of the family parlor, the



country wayside, or other secluded spots. In the automobile, on the beach, in the village green, in the city park, on the dance floor, on the public street, in the electric cars, and one might say wherever adolescents as a group can be seen, petting may be witnessed. There appears to be a casual indifference with many young people to what those about see or say regarding their activities in public. These observations can be made by anyone at any time, and almost anywhere.

It is difficult to account for what appears to be a decided change in the attitude of adolescents toward petting, and it is equally difficult to evaluate what it all means in terms of promiscuous sex activity. Certainly there is no reason to believe that the sex urge is more demanding at the present time than it has been in years past. Probably time will reveal that more young people of all types are indulging in these activities and that they have not changed materially in degree and intensity.

One thinks, of course, of the automobile, modern dress, and the popularity of the pocket flask as being important with certain groups, as factors leading to petting. More important and fundamental, however, is the fact that girls are not being divided so distinctly into the good and the bad, and boys are not putting their sweethearts on pedestals and thinking of their Saturday-night friends as simply instruments for gratifying their passions. There has grown a more healthy comradeship among young people of both sexes, an effort to find in the one individual those varied satisfactions which it is but human to desire. This need not mean that actual sex relationships are more commonly practiced. Petting is perhaps being utilized more and more as a sublimation.

The essential contribution that a parent has to make to this particular adolescent situation is that petting is very definitely a sex experience; that naturally and normally, under happy marital relationships, it precedes sexual intercourse, which in the unmarried state is as dangerous in its social implications as it ever was, in loss of social approbation, mental conflict, venereal disease, and pregnancy.

Sex as one of the important factors of human development should be regarded and discussed by parents as they would approach health. The girl who overeats, who allows herself to get constipated, who fails to look after her skin, and who fails to follow other hygienic regulations gets fat and develops a poor complexion, never feels right, and is likely to become physically unattractive and socially handicapped. The girl who permits promiscuous petting with unlimited privileges gets the reputation of being "easy" and "common." As a social asset, she is less valuable and soon finds that she is left out of much that would contribute to her happiness. This

may be a rather low level of adjustment from a purely moral point of view, but young people can and do understand when we talk to them about what type of conduct will actually work out to their advantage. There is no danger in telling these young people that we understand all the urges that quite naturally prompt them to seek the thrills of life in this particular way, yet at the same time show them by the innumerable examples which are always available that it actually pays to postpone these indulgences and help them find other emotional outlets.

It is well to keep before these young people that the various activities which are generally covered by the term petting all too frequently fail to give the parties involved the satisfactions they are after. Frequently these experiences are difficult to digest. To many they are esthetically repulsive, morally indigestible, and emotionally unsatisfying. Even so, they may become habits after an appetite has been created for this particular type of emotional stimulation. The early indulgences are often brought about by the desire to test out life, to try a new experience, to indulge in some new thrill. But after that they are often carried on merely as a means to an end. That end may be a desire for popularity, attention, and the participation in social activity which they feel would otherwise be denied them.

These are all factors which should be discussed frankly with the adolescent, and, again, the discussion may well be carried on as a subject of interest and practical importance, rather than as a personal problem. It should be kept in mind that this problem of sex is but one aspect of life for the adolescent and that many pitfalls and conflicts may arise in his effort to solve this one particular problem. The adolescent will make his own adjustment to life adequately only when he does it without being harmful to others. The adult who is in a position to gain the confidence and respect of the adolescent holds the strategic position. This can come about only when the adolescent is sure that he is dealing with someone who has a clear idea what the boy's problems really are and a practical plan or philosophy of life that will meet the boy's daily needs. The adult who deals with adolescents successfully will have an appreciation and understanding of adolescent problems in general as they exist today and also he should know well each individual whose conduct he is trying to affect.

## THE NEEDS OF THE PARENT

Parents must understand not only the real needs of the child but their own needs and be able to satisfy them in a more wholesome manner than at the child's expense. (Pearson, Gerald H. J., M.D.: *What the Adolescent Girl Needs in Her Home*. *Mental Hygiene*, vol. 14, no. 1 (January 1930), pp. 40-53.)

Much that has had to do with the relationship between parent and child, particularly that aspect of these relationships which has worked out to the disadvantage of both child and parent, has been stressed in the previous sections. One cannot understand childhood behavior without carefully investigating the effects that other people in the environment have upon the child, and of course the people who influence the conduct of children the most are the parents. In spite of an effort to avoid being unduly critical and assuming the attitude of the reformer toward the parents, it has been necessary to discuss frankly the common blunders which as parents we often make quite unconsciously. Those more sensitive individuals who read this bulletin may be left with the idea that there are but a limited number of children who succeed in emerging from the adolescent period enjoying good mental health and that this success has been accomplished in spite of parents, rather than because of them. It is not the intention of the author to leave this impression.

Let us therefore turn to some of the more constructive aspects of the parent-child relationship. This relationship has changed so markedly during the past 2 decades that it is not surprising that parents find themselves a bit confused as to just what their obligations and responsibilities toward their children are in this modern world. Moreover, many children would consider it but a relic of the past if their obligations to their parents were brought up for consideration. For generations in practically all countries, civilized and uncivilized, children have been bidden to respect, honor, and obey parents. In the laws of the ancients there were no exceptions and no extenuating circumstances for any lack of respect on the part of children toward their parents. Time itself has introduced social factors which necessarily must affect the child's attitude toward his parents. As civilization has advanced and the interests of man have extended beyond hunting, fishing, fighting, and the interests of woman beyond childbearing and housekeeping, and as various trades and professions and occupations have developed, children have had increased opportunity for becoming intimately associated with a varied group of people. Under these conditions parents obviously become less dominant factors in the lives of their children.

The foregoing is simply mentioned in order that parents may grasp the idea that their children are less dependent upon them than

they were upon their parents. One must understand and appreciate how efficiently and with how limited an amount of turmoil and confusion young people have taken this recent step toward developing their own independence. What this sudden transition in the attitude of adolescents toward their elders actually means is that if parents are going to continue to stand out in the social scheme of things as being the dominant influence in the lives of their children, this influence must take root at any early age and not be postponed simply to suit the convenience of the parents until the child is fairly well advanced toward adolescence. The idea which was so firmly fixed in the minds of children a few generations ago that all parents were endowed with wisdom, that they were all worthy of respect, that their achievements entitled them to admiration, and that their understanding of human nature was unfailing, no longer exists. This does not mean that children no longer love, respect, and admire their parents, but it does mean that children view their parents more critically; and if the latter are weighed and found wanting, they are not endowed, merely because they are parents, with virtues which they do not possess.

There is, on the other hand, a large group of parents who do not wish for obedience and respect from their adolescents; on the contrary, they wish to be the companions and friends of their adolescent sons and daughters, desiring only to be close to them and intimate with them. But they, too, are destined to disappointment, for, as has been pointed out, young people seek intimacy and companionship with those of their own age. The errors into which such parents are led may be seen in the following case:

*Isabel's* mother had married shortly after graduating from high school and was still in her early thirties when her daughter began to show signs of growing up. She had two younger children, but as they were both boys she had centered all her hopes in Isabel so far as companionship for herself was concerned. In spite of her many duties as mother and homemaker, she had found time to keep up a good game of golf. She also played bridge several times a week, read the latest novels, and attended the outstanding movies. She was interested in fashions, enjoyed shopping, and was always smartly dressed. In short, she was one of those modern mothers who seem not only to keep up with the coming generation but at times to get ahead of it, and she was confident that she and her daughter would soon be able to play together more as sisters than as mother and daughter.

One of her first disappointments came over a new dress which Isabel needed for a class dinner. She had talked it all over chummily with her daughter for several days. She decided enthusiastically that the color would be blue, and with the same enthusiasm she went down town, bringing back the blue dress of her choice. She tried to pass on some of her eager excitement to Isabel as she tried the dress on her, asking whether it wasn't fun to be going to a class dinner, and didn't the dress look grown up, and so on, to all of which Isabel responded quietly and almost sulkily.

The following day Isabel returned home from school very late and calmly explained that she had purchased a dress for the class dinner. It was a less expensive dress than the one her mother had bought and certainly less distinctive. But she had selected it herself with the assistance of one of her own friends, and she declared that this was the dress she would wear and no other.

When the night of the dinner came, Isabel dressed in her room without calling her mother in for assistance or for approval, and slipping her coat over her dress, she ran downstairs and out of the house without letting her mother catch as much as a glimpse of her. The latter was hurt and puzzled; yet as the evening wore on, her spirits rose and she began to look forward to Isabel's return when they would talk it all over. When Isabel finally came up the stairs she called out eagerly, "Hello, dear. Did you have a good time? Come in and tell Mummy all about it." To which Isabel replied, "Oh, are you still up? I'm too tired to talk any more tonight. I'm going right to bed. Good night."

Isabel became increasingly secretive, and yet, so far as anyone knew, she never did anything which she had any reason to hide from her family. But she resented her mother's great eagerness to share all her experiences and to discuss frankly her most intimate thoughts and feelings. Perhaps she suspected that her mother would boast to her friends of her intimate relationship with her daughter and would repeat everything her daughter told her; perhaps she felt that she did not intrude upon her mother's privacy and wished her mother not to intrude on hers; or perhaps she wished to shield her own newly developing personality from the mature and dominating personality of her mother. At all events, she withdrew more and more into herself in every way. If her mother came into her room when she was dressing, she fled to the clothes closet; if her mother was around in the evening when she was studying she locked the door of her room; before leaving the house in the morning she locked her desk lest her mother touch any of the things; she would tell her parents where she was going, and she would supply whatever details her father requested, but she would never discuss her activities with them or describe what had happened or who was there.

This went on month after month. Isabel's mother still made efforts to get close to her. She would still come into her bedroom occasionally and sit in a corner hoping to watch Isabel dress and be able to talk things over. Sometimes she made such remarks as this: "Isabel, you seem to forget that I am your mother. You hide yourself so persistently that I don't believe I know what you look like without your clothes on, and I'm your own mother!"

She was similarly grieved over the fact that Isabel never mentioned to her anything even remotely related to the subject of sex. Isabel listened with an indifferent expression when her mother tried to explain the process of menstruation to her, and promptly talked about something else; in fact, this was a subject which she consistently avoided with her mother, remaining silent concerning herself and ignoring any remarks made by her mother.

Isabel's devotion to her carefully locked diary added further to her mother's anguish. Why couldn't her daughter confide in her? What had she ever done to Isabel to bring this upon herself? She felt that she was a failure and could not understand why.

This case has been given in considerable detail because it includes so many of the typical sources of difficulty and misunderstanding arising between parent and adolescent. Parents frequently become much distressed over the strange behavior of sons and daughters who seem abnormally modest in dressing in the presence of their parents; who never report on various phases of their physiological

development; who seem embarrassed, indifferent, or annoyed when parents discuss sex with them; who keep private diaries; who never have anything to relate after attending a party or being out for an evening. Such parents are unaware first of all of the gulf that exists between any two generations merely because of the difference in age regardless of how modern the point of view or how youthful the manners of the individual mother. Teachers and recreation leaders make this same mistake when they try to bridge this gulf with some such statement as "Let's all be boys together" or "We're just a bunch of girls talking things over frankly." It is far wiser to be a parent—or a teacher or a recreation leader or other adult—in manner and attitude as well as in actuality, and to say whatever one has to say frankly, sincerely, and with dignity, and then to let young people be young.

Although we may remember how we looked when we were 15, our present 15-year olds see us only as the aging adults we are, no longer lithe and sparkling, but increasingly stolid, wrinkled, heavy, and growing gray or bald. The very idea of our being on the same level with them and sharing experience as equals is preposterous and even absurd to them. We may try to use adolescent colloquialisms and hope to establish a relationship of intimacy and mutual confidence by talking of social, emotional, or physiological experiences in the popular terms of our own day without realizing that popular vocabularies change with the fashions and that in such attempts to reach the adolescent level we meet with as little success as we would by dressing in the clothes of our youth. It is useless, for example, to talk to the adolescent about the undesirability of spooning; for the adolescent of today does not spoon. Although yesterday's spooning may be today's necking, our very word stamps us as belonging to another generation. The adolescent at once concludes that we speak another language and have no understanding of his problems.

Our attitudes date us quite as definitely as our vocabularies. One generation contemplates the phenomenon of birth with an attitude of romantic sentimentality, while another considers it but an incident; one generation approaches the female sex with an attitude of awe and adoration, while in another generation women themselves claim the right to be regarded as equals; one generation considers sex relations a profane mystery, while another endows them with spiritual significance, and another dismisses them as one of the natural and normal animal phases of life. There are always some individuals who are in advance of their generation and some who are behind and some who must be at war with existing conditions whatever they are. But each generation has its trends, and each new generation feels the urge to depart from these trends.

There is a second obstacle to the relationship of intimate equality which such parents as Isabel's mother desire with their children, and that is the fundamental difference in personality that may exist between parents and their children despite all ties of blood. Isabel's mother had made every effort to overcome all differences that might be attributed to her greater age and to the fact that she had belonged to another generation; she dressed, acted, played, and thought according to Isabel's own generation. But she had not overcome the personality differences between herself and Isabel. In fact she did not even recognize them, for she was constantly expressing surprise over the fact that her own daughter should not be just like her in all her ways and thoughts. But daughters take after their fathers as well as after their mothers, and sometimes they resemble distant relatives on either side. It is unreasonable for parents to expect to be able to identify themselves with them or relive their lives through them.

And this touches upon the third obstacle to an intimate identification between the parent and his adolescent child—namely, the adolescent's need to live his own life. Isabel wanted to lead her own life, even if it meant no more than choosing her own clothes and thinking some of her own thoughts. It would have been quite possible for her mother to be sympathetically interested in her plans and even to exert considerable influence on her behavior without trying to force herself into the girl's physical, intellectual, and emotional privacy or drown her daughter's reactions with her own enthusiasm and excitement. She would undoubtedly have remained closer to her daughter if she had been less aggressive in her approach to her.

The most important contribution which the parent can make to the child is that of preparing him to assume the obligations and responsibilities which are associated with independence. If it be true that children are, as a group, throwing off the parental shackles at an earlier date than they have done heretofore, it means that parents must see that they are adequately equipped with habits and personality traits and mental attitudes toward life that will work out to their advantage. The problem of the child's dependence upon the parent may be very successfully associated a little later with the parent's emotional dependence upon the child. There are those parents who have built their lives so intimately around their children that they become extremely unhappy when they appreciate that the parent no longer serves the same purpose to the adolescent as he did to the younger child. It cannot be denied that this attitude of the parent toward the child is fundamentally selfish and not infrequently results unhappily for all concerned, especially if the child has not quite grown up himself.

A good example of parental dependence upon children may be seen in Mrs. D, a mother who was so emotionally bound up in her 22-year-old son that she could not bear the thought of his going away on a vacation with his wife whom he had married within the year. Mrs. D deliberately planned and schemed that she might have her son at her summer home in the mountains, at the same time intimating that this would probably not be so healthful a place for his wife as the seashore would be.

Many a parent with this selfish, demanding, emotional attitude toward his children has built up barriers which have prevented a happy parental relationship in later years. Many an oversolicitous, selfish mother has wrecked the marital happiness of her son, and many a father has rendered himself miserable and unhappy and has developed feelings of being misunderstood and neglected, simply because their children did not retain in adolescent life the immature, dependent, emotional attitude which had meant so much to these solicitous parents in the years gone by. So it is well to point out that parents must prepare themselves to deal wisely with that phase of life when their children are no longer to be dependent upon them. Mothers are very much more likely to be affected by this situation than fathers because in the natural course of events men still continue to be preoccupied with the task of providing for the family. Their time is spent at the office, shop, or factory, and they come in contact with many people and many problems. The mother's big job, however, has been that of rearing the children; and unless she has provided herself with some other interests, she will feel the vacuum created when they are no longer demanding all her time.

Much has been said about the parents' responsibility toward the child, and during early years it is the parent who must supply the initiative, judgment, and patience which this task entails. But it must be kept in mind that as the child advances in years he, too, will have more and more to contribute toward the happiness and satisfaction of family life. Essentially the relationship between parent and child should be maintained by a mutual effort to acquire a better understanding of each other's personality, each other's interests, problems, and pleasures—both parent and child endeavoring on the one hand to appreciate the various factors contributing to their respective health, efficiency, and happiness, and, on the other hand, to gain a clearer conception of the influences leading to dissatisfaction, failure, and defeat.

Children will become interested in parents and the family as a group only if they are permitted to take an active part in the family activities at the earliest possible age. Children should be given an intelligent insight into what goes to make up the life of the parents. The child should know something about his father's work, his mother's responsibilities in running the house, the social and economic status of his particular family as compared with that of other



families. Thus he will have an intelligent appreciation of just what he is entitled to in the way of pleasures and amusements, clothes, spending money, and so forth. Children at the adolescent age undoubtedly would dispense money with more judgment and put a higher value on the real things of life if they were better informed as to the amount of effort their parents have to make to supply their needs. Children cannot be expected to grasp the significance of the necessity of budgeting one's time and money at first; but it is only reasonable to expect that if knowledge is intelligently handed out on these subjects, it will soon meet with something that is very much worth while to both parent and child. (This aspect of the parent-child relationship has already been touched upon in the sections on work and leisure.)

But it must be repeated that this mutual interest in the affairs of parents and child must start at an early age, so that when the child reaches adolescence he will not be confronted suddenly with responsibilities that he will very likely resent. It is desirable to develop in him that attitude which will just naturally make him reach out and do his part of the job, for unless it is done in this spirit and not forced upon him, there is great danger that it will not be done at all.

But all these attitudes, habits, and personality traits must be regarded as only the tools with which the individual makes a place for himself in the social scheme of things—implements which he utilizes in the process of creating relationships that will be satisfactory and happy not only for himself but also for all those with whom he comes in contact. In the process of development he must ever be ready to discard those tools which, although perhaps useful in one period of life, have become inadequate for the present need. Fortunately, we are well endowed with a plasticity which enables us to modify our ideas and conduct, whether as adolescents discarding infantile behavior patterns or as parents discarding adolescent behavior patterns.

There is no time when life presents so many doubts and indecisions as during the adolescent years. To many young persons life becomes a very perplexing problem as their earlier hopes and aspirations turn out to be daydreams and illusions, and there is a tendency for them to be overwhelmed with the futility of effort. The child who has had the advantage of living in a home with a religious background—that type of religion which is practiced as well as preached and which teaches the individual to think in terms of others than himself—finds that something very fundamental and important has been woven into the moral fabric of his personality. Religion helps to give to the boy or girl that sense of security and worthwhileness about life both present and future that the maturing individual needs.

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